

THE PROPHET AND THE ISLAMIC STATE

A profile of the Prophet of Islam
(peace be upon him) and a synopsis
of the Islamic State he established
in Madina in Arabia to spread
God's Message in the World

By
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PREFACE

"What was the form and shape of the Islamic State founded by Prophet Muhammad?" This question was often put to me in the course of my lectures on Islamic themes, particularly in Britain and North America. Since the publication and world-wide circulation of my two monographs on the Prophet's life, namely the **Prophet of Peace and Humanity** (1986-88) and the **Prophet of Islam – A Blessing to Mankind** (1989), a number of their readers in the West have written to me, suggesting that I should author a concise book containing a profile of the Prophet's lifework and a synopsis of the Islamic State he founded and nurtured in Madina to spread God's Word in the world. This book is my response to their welcome suggestion.

The Prophet of Islam had two inter-related roles-- the Messenger of God and the founder and ruler of the first Islamic State in the world. In the chronicles of mankind, it was the unique privilege of Prophet Muhammad that he conveyed to the world the Message of God, as is contained in the holy Quran, and he also carried His Commandments into practice by setting up the Islamic State in Madina and giving it the form and shape of statehood in the short span of ten years. The Divinely-ordained goal of his Prophetic Mission was to establish an Islamic Social Order for the benefit of humanity. He succeeded in fostering a pious and caring society and in founding a righteous State which gave permanence to the precepts and injunctions of the Islamic Faith. The Islamic State was an instrument for the creation of durable institutions to demonstrate the eminent practicability of God's laws in the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet on which is based the all-embracing Islamic Way of Life.

Some of Islam's critics have pooh-poohed the Muslim view that Madina, under the rule of the Prophet of Islam, had developed into a

full-fledged City State with all the organs and institutions of independent Statehood. Like Doubting Thomases, they ask in disbelief: "How could a little oasis with a few thousand people in the vastness of the Arabian desert be the matrix of a State?" If the ancient cities of Athens and Rome, with their early population of a few thousand people, could be classed as City States by Western political scientists and their achievements extolled by Western historians through the centuries as the triumphs of the West, is it not gross injustice to deny the State of Madina the attributes of Statehood with which the Prophet of Islam had invested it in a decade of his stewardship? The Islamic State in Madina under the Prophet had a well-defined territory, a homogenous people all of whom spoke Arabic and most believed in Islam; it had an organised political community under one government; it had the holy Quran as its Constitution and it had the armed strength to maintain order at home and to ward off external aggression. By all canons and standards of Western political science, Madina was a State and the Prophet had endowed it with the means to grow and expand.

The City of Rome took four long centuries after its founding by Romulus in 753 B.C. to burgeon into the mighty Roman Empire of ancient times. But the Islamic State of Madina, built up by the Prophet in the third decade of the 7th Century A.D., was so strong in its foundations of Statehood that in less than 80 years, it shaped into the inter-Continental holy Islamic Empire, stretching from Spain to the fringes of China and the Indus in India-- a larger territorial and demographic entity than even the holy Roman Empire after its Emperors converted to Christianity in the Third Century A.D. While the conquests of the Roman Empire were entombed in the vaults of history after a few centuries, the vast gifts of Islam to human civilisation during the millennium of its glory remain mankind's cherished treasures, animating the hearts and minds of nearly 1200 million Muslims. The impression made by Islam and the rich civilisation it nurtured on European science, thought, religion, learning and the arts of living was so profound that its effects have lasted to this day.

Although the hard crust of prejudice against Islam, most of which stemmed from the Christian Crusades of two centuries (A.D. 1095-1291), still lingers in some parts of the West, typical of the new ferment of acknowledging the gifts of the Islamic Civilisation to the world is this comment from a renowned American historian, Daniel J. Boorstin, on Arab geography in the Middle Ages: "...While medieval European cosmographers reposed in dogmatic slumber, Arab geographers were at home in the works of Ptolemy, suggesting that the Indian Ocean was not Ptolemy's closed sea but that it actually flowed into the Atlantic. One of the most influential of these pioneer Arab geographers was the versatile Al-Biruni (973-1050), one of the greatest Muslim scientists of the Middle Ages...even before he was 17, he had made an improved device for determining latitude.." (The Discoverers, page 183).

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* notes: "Islam acquired its characteristic ethos as a religion, uniting in itself both the spiritual and temporal aspects of life, in seeking to regulate not only the individual's relationship to God (through his conscience) but human relationships in a social setting as well. Thus there is not only an Islamic religious institution but also an Islamic Law, State and other institutions governing society."

After a slumber of 150 years, the global Islamic Community (the *Ummah*) is again on the march. About 1.2 billion Muslims now carry with a sense of pride the distinctive badge of their Islamic identity. All the hues of the human race---black, brown, yellow and white--mingle beautifully in the fraternity of Islam. Forty-six independent Muslim States, which are united in the fold of the Jeddah-based Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), have become a force in world affairs. An overwhelming majority of them regained independence from colonial rule in the past forty-four years. In playing an active role in the forum of the United Nations, they are demonstrating the universal ethos of the Islamic Faith. God's bounty has invested many of these Islamic States with the sinews of

economic strength whose judicious and far-sighted use can change the fate and fortune of the entire Muslim community on earth. Resurgent Islam shows a new dynamism and self-confidence in responding to the challenges from its foes. In doing so, the Muslim **Ummah** is again animated by the imperishable Spirit of Islam and the determination to explore the pathway to glory and greatness which the Prophet of Islam had traversed fourteen centuries ago in order to establish the Islamic Order and the Islamic State.

The best brains and the finest scholarship in the Islamic World are being rapidly mobilised to rediscover the pristine excellence of Islam, the eternal validity of its postulates and precepts and the cures it had prescribed for treating the many afflictions of mankind. The cobwebs of lies and distortions, which Islam's enemies and Satanic fibsters had woven over the centuries to blur its beneficent image, are being torn apart. More people outside the fold of Islam now know about Islam's universal message and its teachings than ever before. Hundreds of millions of Muslims throughout the world are now reinforcing the foundations of their faith in Islam by learning anew its religious, ethical and legal codes and the discoveries and inventions it gifted to mankind.

The history of the past fourteen centuries of Islam bears testimony to the fact that Islam's dynamism and its resilience have been its shields both in the glorious era of its triumphs and the lean years of adversity. It was this dynamic quality of Islam and the ballast of divine support which enabled it to burst forth from its matrix of Arabia with lightning speed and surge across three continents in a few decades. In its massive sweep through most of the then inhabited world, Islam clashed with the most powerful religions and empires of that age and won the laurels of victory. But most of its conquests endured the wear and tear of time and the vicissitudes of history because they were not merely acquisitions of land but an everlasting conquest of the minds and hearts of the vast millions who came under its sway. Islam was spread more by the moral

force of persuasion and the nobility of the conduct of those who propagated it than by the cut and thrust of the sword or the fiat of the ruler. This gave Islam an astonishing ability to survive and spread even in a hostile environment. During the heyday of European colonialism, its Empire-builders spared no opportunity to smother Islam in the many Muslim empires they seized in Asia and Africa. Islam's exemplary quality of resilience came to its rescue and the blandishments, subversion and coercion used by the European rulers to wean Muslims away from Islam had hardly any effect. Faith in God and love for Prophet Muhammad were so deep-rooted in the Muslims' soul that they clung passionately to their Islamic anchor. Even in the 20th Century A.D. the forces of secularism, atheism and other godless creeds have failed to subvert the faith of Muslims in their eternal religion. In Communist countries, where many followers of other religions turned atheists the votaries of Islam have, by and large, remained steadfast in their allegiance to God. The heroic Muslim struggle for freedom and justice in Palestine, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Kashmir, Cyprus and the Philippines is a contemporary example of Islam's strength and resilience.

The advocates of materialism and the devotees of science and technology often question the validity of Islamic precepts in the space age. What they ignore is the fact that Islam lays the utmost emphasis on the acquiring of knowledge and learning. Go to the farthest corners of the globe in quest of knowledge was Islam's injunction to its followers. When Europe was enshrouded in the Dark Ages, the light of knowledge radiated from the countless seats of learning and research in the world of Islam. The outstanding achievements of Muslim scholars and scientists in the Middle Ages in medicine, mathematics, astronomy, navigation, architecture, philosophy, history, economics and many other arts and sciences are Islam's legacy to modern civilisation. Even during the Crusades, which some European powers inflicted on the Muslim East, the fruits and blessings of Muslim scholarship and research flowed to Europe, paving the way for European Renaissance.

To imbibe the Spirit of Islam, a study of the Quran and the lifework of the Prophet, which includes the Islamic State of Madina, is of profound importance for every Muslim who wishes to strengthen his Faith. A knowledge of Islam's roots, covering the social and governmental institutions established by the Prophet in the Islamic State, will be of invaluable help in mapping the Muslim **Ummah's** strategy for the future. Islam's high moral and ethical value system contributed immensely to the rapid spread of Islam in the world. The Prophet practised Islam's noble precepts in his daily life and in conducting the affairs of the Islamic State. The four Caliphs who followed him also practised these high-minded precepts. As a practical religion, Islam expects its followers to practise what they profess and believe in. Those who default deserve blame, not the Islamic Code. If a Muslim in his conduct violates the Islamic commandments, it gives comfort to the enemies of Islam. This is the rationale for the movement in many Muslim communities for a return to the Islamic Way of Life taught by the Prophet. To the rulers of the Muslim States of today, the Prophet's example in administering the Islamic State offers the most useful book of lessons and inspiration. The solidarity and cooperation of the Islamic States can be a shield of protection to them against the perils to which they are exposed. It may pave the way for the establishment of a Commonwealth of Islam, fulfilling the Prophet's vision.

The message of Islam is for all mankind. It is a truly universal religion. The Prophet's concept of a universal brotherhood under the umbrella of Islam makes it an ideal religion for humanity. A noted British historian, Philip Gibbs, seemed to share this view when he wrote that Islam had done more for "the progress of civilisation and morality than any other faith which has animated the souls of men since the beginning of creation" Arnold Toynbee, in his ten volume masterpiece, **A study of history**, diagnosed that in the tussle between the Western and the Communist Ways of Life for the allegiance of mankind, the Islamic tradition of the brotherhood of man would seem to be a better ideal for meeting the social needs of the time.

The spread of Islam in North America, Britain and Continental Europe during the 20th Century and the recent proliferation of Islamic literature in all parts of the globe are indicators of the renewed strength of this universal religion. Muslims are no longer the captives of the past; their sights are now trained on the future. A new and powerful urge has gripped their minds and souls that they should endeavour to accomplish in the service of Islam what would match the glorious achievements of their forefathers. And in seeking to do so, they invoke the blessings of God for all of mankind.

The Prophet of Islam preached and practised the virtue of religious tolerance and co-existence in his dealings with the non-Muslims, particularly Jews and Christians. Inter-Faith dialogue, such as the one he had in Madina with the Christian priests from Najran in Southern Arabia, is often helpful in removing the mists of misunderstandings and the mischief of Satanic fibsters. The Prophet encouraged this mode of peaceful communication with the non-Muslims. Wisdom demands that we should not be the captives of past hatreds. As a universal religion based on the concept of the brotherhood of mankind, Islam gave pardon and mercy to its worst enemies. In a spirit of live and let live, we, the Muslims, should seek rapport and understanding with the followers of other religions, especially those who worship the God whom Prophet Abraham worshipped.

In writing this book, I have endeavoured not to entangle myself in the briars of religious, sectarian and historical controversies; nor have I encrusted it with sterile pedagogics and polemical disputation. Many of its pages reflect my response--though drastically abridged due to the constraints of space--to the questions put to me about the Quranic teachings, the Prophet's lifework and the Islamic State in my public lectures in Britain, the USA and other countries of the West. My hope is that the readers of this book will feel impelled to look into more exhaustive and authoritative works some of which are mentioned in the bibliography. Man is fallible; so am I. Despite

my best care, some errors may have inadvertently crept into this book. I will gratefully welcome any comments or corrections which my gracious readers may volunteer and these will be incorporated in the next edition.

I remain permanently indebted to my father, the late Syed Abdul Hafiz, whose wish it was that I should work for promoting a better understanding of Islam in the West and help in removing the cobwebs of misunderstandings about our Faith and our Prophet which still linger in some Western countries. My gratitude to my mother, Begum Khurshid Hafiz, is immense for motivating me to write books on the life of the Prophet. Herself the author of many books in Urdu, she has collected and gifted to me a number of informative books on Islam which are at present out of print. I am grateful to my wife, Abida Aziz, for her cooperation, understanding and helpful attitude during the many months of research and study when I literally burnt the midnight oil to write this book. Above all, I bow my head in profound gratitude to the Almighty God for his benign mercy and express my gratefulness from every fibre of my being to our beloved Prophet for showing me the right path. Amen!

Qutubuddin Aziz

Chapter 1

THE MESSENGER OF GOD

Childhood

Prophet Muhammad was born in the year 570 of the Christian era in the city of Makkah in Arabia. His father, Abdullah bin Abdul Muttalib, was a scion of the noble Hashimite clan of the powerful and affluent Quraysh tribe whose elders traced their lineage to Prophet Abraham and to the founder of Makkah — the city which was blessed with the ancient shrine of the Kaaba. Alas! Abdullah, a thriving merchant, did not live to see the birth of his son who was destined to spread God's Message of peace, piety and human brotherhood on earth. He died a few months before his son was born. Abdullah, who led trading caravans to Syria and Palestine, was taken ill in the city of Madina where he died and was buried there. In those days, Madina, a hospitable oasis 290 miles to the north of Makkah, was known as Yathrib.

The mother of the infant Muhammad was the noble-familied, pretty and cultured Aminah who loved her handsome son. Despite the bereavement of widowhood inflicted on her at a young age, she looked after him with utmost affection and devotion. His paternal grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, who commanded high esteem in the Makkan society, also loved his grandson. As was the prevalent custom in Arabia, Aminah appointed Halima, the wife of a shepherd of the Bani Saad clan, as a wet-nurse to the child. A conscientious and caring foster mother, Halima breastfed the infant Muhammad like her own son in her Bedouin home out in the desert, not far from Makkah. He spent the years of infancy in the home of his foster parents and saw his mother, Aminah, and his grandfather from time to time. His exposure to the rigours of Bedouin life in the desert gave him self-confidence at an early age which a pampered

existence in Makkah's urban comfort may have denied to him. His foster parents prospered and attributed their good fortune to Muhammad's presence in their desert home.

The year of Muhammad's birth was eventful and of historic significance in Arabia's history because a miracle saved Makkah and the holy Kaaba from being razed to the ground by the invading army of Abraha, the Abyssinian Governor of Yemen. His troops retreated from the outworks of Makkah when swarms of ferocious-looking birds and blinding sand storms upset their lead elephant and caused chaos and fear in their ranks.

Muhammad was hardly six years old when a second tragedy struck him. His mother had taken him to Madina to visit the grave of his father. On the way back to Makkah, she fell ill and died suddenly. His grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, a kind-hearted and caring patriarch of the Hashimite clan, took the well-behaved and pensive orphan in his guardianship. Despite his old age, Muttalib gave the child the affection and care which he desperately needed. But hardly two years had passed and he was barely eight when the shock of another tragedy afflicted him; he lost his loving grandfather who died at the age of 82. Muttalib willed that his son, Abu Talib, the new head of the Hashimite clan, should make Muhammad his ward and look after his upbringing and education. In the partly pastoral economy of Makkah, sheep had considerable value and Abu Talib sometimes deputed his nephew to look after his flock. In tending the sheep, Muhammad was dutiful and alert which impressed his Uncle. Makkah was also a commercial centre and Abu Talib had trading interests. When the boy was 12, Abu Talib took him to Syria with a trading caravan led by him. In Syria, a Christian monk, Bahira, saw the young Muhammad and discerned in him the signs of Prophethood. His Syrian excursion broadened the horizons of his knowledge of the world, of geography and commerce and of people who spoke diverse languages and lived differently from the Makkans. Travelling for trade was an educative process in which Muhammad

also learnt of other religions and the style of governments in the countries he saw in what is now called the Middle East.

Social Service

In his hometown of Makkah, the teenage Muhammad took interest in tribal and civic affairs and learnt the use of the sword, the bow and arrow without which a tribal scion's education was not complete. When war broke out between the Quraysh and the Qais tribes, Muhammad was naturally on the side of his Uncle and his Quraysh compatriots. Averse to shedding human blood, he tended the wounded in the battle of Fajir and gave cheer and hope to his tribal friends from Makkah. Subsequently, he joined his Uncle, Abu Talib, and a band of nobly-motivated young men in Makkah in establishing a social service agency which helped the weak, the destitute, the oppressed and the traveller. He pledged support to the charter which set up this welfare organisation and worked devotedly through it for the good of the people.

On one occasion, the teenage Muhammad's extraordinary wisdom averted a major tribal war. The ancient shrine of the Kaaba in Makkah, which he often visited in the company of his grandfather, was renovated by the city's tribal elders. But a dispute arose amongst the many tribes for whom the Kaaba was sacred as to who should place inside it the Black Stone which, according to tradition and belief, was a gift from the Heavens. It was decided by the gathering of tribal elders that the person who enters the Kaaba with the first light of dawn on the morrow should have the privilege of doing this duty. And the next morning the teenage Muhammad was the first to enter the precincts of the Kaaba. Showing amazing statesmanship at such a young age, he persuaded the tribal elders to place the Black Stone on a large thick cloak and the elders of all the tribes joined in lifting it and placing it in the Kaaba. Everyone was pleased and happy; Makkah's peace was saved by the young Muhammad.

Trade

Initiated into the world of business and commerce by his Uncle, Abu Talib, the young Muhammad won fame as a trustworthy, honest and successful trader. According to the practice of the time, moneyed persons in Makkah, who wished to invest in trade, gave their merchandise to a reliable trader who had knowledge and experience of foreign markets and he undertook journeys of commerce on their behalf, usually getting a fair commission and a share in the profits. Muhammad's trading missions to Syria, Palestine and Yemen yielded good profits and those who entrusted him with their goods reaped large dividends. His honesty as a businessman was so well-known that many Makkans deposited their wealth with him and called him **Amin**, the reliable trustee.

A wealthy widow of noble ancestry, Khadijah, sent Muhammad on a trading mission to Syria where he sold her merchandise from Makkah for a good profit and returned home with riches all of which he handed over to her. Deeply impressed by his honesty, his business acumen, his polite speech and his gentle manners, 40-year old, twice-widowed Khadijah proposed marriage to the 25-year old Muhammad through a traditional match-maker. Muhammad liked Khadijah, who was a distant cousin of his, and they were married before a large gathering of their relatives. He continued his trading missions and saw more countries and more people. Muhammad loved his wife devotedly; so long as she lived she was the only woman in his life. All through the quarter century of their married life, their marital relations were blissful. Khadijah bore him six children, two sons and four daughters, including Fatima whom he adored. The sons died in their infancy.

Prophethood

Right from his youthful days, Muhammad detested the hundreds of idols which the Makkan polytheists worshipped in the holy Kaaba, defiling its ancient Abrahamic origin as a House of God. He abstained from the feasts which they held to honour these 360

stones. Muhammad appealed to them in gentle words to give up the evil practices they followed as a part of their idolatrous existence, particularly nude pilgrimage and bacchanal orgies in the holy Kaaba. To escape from the din and bustle of the city, Muhammad sometimes sought refuge in solitude in the Cave of Hira, three miles from Makkah. Having a contemplative mind, a perceptive soul and an overriding sense of right and wrong, he meditated for long hours on the inscrutable mysteries of the universe, the role and destiny of man on earth, the purpose of life and the inevitability of death. His soul yearned for the divine light that would quieten the storms which raged in the depths of his heart and give his life a new direction and noble goals. Muhammad was utterly dissatisfied with the primitive cults and beliefs which dominated the milieu of his time and made life stagnant and purposeless. He hated the idols in the Kaaba, pitied those who worshipped them and he was convinced that idolatry was the source of evil in Makkah.

On an epochal day, the Archangel Gabriel appeared before him in the stillness of the Cave of Hira and asked him to recite the name of the Almighty Allah, the Lord of the Heavens and the Creator of the Earth and of all mankind. The Angel told Muhammad that God had chosen him to be His Messenger on earth, like the Prophets He had sent before him to preach the Word of God to mankind. Shocked by the suddenness and the glory of the divine revelation and the enormity of the Heavenly assignment given to him, 40-year-old Muhammad hurried to his loving wife, Khadijah, and narrated to her the dramatic happening in the Cave of Hira. She was convinced that it was an angelic visitation and a command from God that he was henceforth to be His Prophet and Messenger on earth, entrusted with the divine mission of spreading His Word to the farthest corners of the globe. Thus a noble and righteous lady became the first convert to Islam and a believer in the Prophethood of Muhammad. She took him to her Christian cousin, Warqah bin Naufal, one of the scholars of Judaism and Christianity in Makkah, and Muhammad gave him a detailed account of the Angel Gabriel's revelation. War-

qah acknowledged Muhammad as the Promised Prophet of God and told him that the difficulties which he was bound to encounter should not deter him from conducting his Prophetic Mission as the Messenger of God.

The Quran

The Angel Gabriel visited the Prophet from time to time and revealed to him the Word of God in the shape of what Muslims know as the holy Quran. Besides his affectionate and dutiful wife, the Prophet shared knowledge of the divine revelations with some of his close relatives and trusted friends. Amongst them were the rich and generous Abu Bakr, his brave first cousin, Ali bin Abu Talib, who respected him like a father, the learned Osman bin Affan, the intrepid Saad bin Abi Waqas and Khadijah's freed slave, Zaid, whom the Prophet treated like his own son. They hailed Prophet Muhammad as God's Prophet and joined the fold of Islam. Encouraged by divine support and the unfailing loyalty of his wife, who gave her wealth freely in the service of Islam, and the devotion of his early companions, the Prophet taught them the verses of the Quran and the Islamic mode of prayer to God.

God's Message, as preached by Prophet Muhammad, was simple and straight-forward for the listener to understand. It was not encrusted with pedantry nor was it wrapped in mystery and ambiguity. The listener's declaration that "there is no god except the One and Only God and Muhammad is his Messenger and Prophet" made him forthwith a follower of Islam— a Muslim. The convert to Islam needed no intermediary and no priest to pray to God who, according to the Prophet, was closer to him than even his jugular vein. God's attributes of Mercy and Compassion and the promise of rewards in the Heaven for one's piety and righteousness on earth made the concept of the Divine in Islam far more attractive than the mumbo jumbo of the idolatrous priesthood in Arabia. Prophet Muhammad's Islamic teachings began to make a powerful impact on the people.

Pagan Persecution

When news of the Islamic religious movement launched by Prophet Muhammad in Makkah reached its idol-worshipping rulers, they felt alarmed and considered its monotheistic and unitarian thrust a challenge to the polytheistic base of their authority. The leaders of the Quraysh tried to tempt the Prophet with worldly riches to subvert his faith in God. With rock-like determination, he continued to preach Islam. Makkah's rulers, especially Abu Jahal and Abu Lahab, then unleashed a barrage of scorn, derision and threats on the Prophet and his Muslim followers. He showed angelic patience and fortitude in bearing the persecution inflicted on him and his followers. He did not resort to retaliation although the Muslim ranks now had many fearless and experienced fighters. Islam's enemies even plotted to murder the Prophet but their conspiracies failed.

The fraternity of Islam in Makkah and its neighbourhood was expanding rapidly. It gained in strength when the dynamic Omar, a battle-tested swordsman who was initially opposed to Islam but embraced it when he heard the Quranic recitation from his sister, and the powerful warrior, Hamza, a dear cousin of the Prophet, joined the Muslim fraternity. Slaves saw hope in Islam's message of human brotherhood and the dignity of man and many accepted Islam, unmindful of the tortures to which their idolatrous masters subjected them. What amazed the pagans was that even when the slave, who had embraced Islam, was tortured on the pillory or dipped in a cauldron of boiling oil, his chant of "God is Great" never ceased. The unshakable devotion of the Prophet's followers to him defied the comprehension of their infidel tormentors. Such unfaltering loyalty to their spiritual and temporal leader, who was God's Prophet, was alien to pagan thought and tradition.

Muslims go to Abyssinia

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Deeply grieved by the hardships and persecution which the Makkan rulers had unleashed on the Muslim community, the Prophet

persuaded a group of fifteen Muslims— eleven men and four women— to emigrate to Abyssinia in Africa where a benign Christian ruler, the Negus, gave them asylum. He spurned the mounds of gold which Makkah's emissaries offered to him if he handed over the Muslim refugees to their pagan pursuers. A follower of the Christian Coptic Church, the Negus was pleased when the Muslims said in his Court that they believed in God and His Prophet Muhammad and they also respected Jesus as God's Prophet and his Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary. In two years, Abyssinia had over a hundred Muslim refugees.

Oppression in Makkah

For three long and hardship-laden years, the small Muslim community in Makkah bore the rigours of a social and economic boycott ordered by the city's pagan rulers. But the Muslims never wavered in their allegiance to God, and their faith in the divine mission of the Prophet grew stronger. Led by the Prophet, they held their congregations in the homes of the Faithful and prayed to God. The process of Quranic Revelation to the Prophet continued and the Companions memorised and wrote on parchments or dried skins the Divine verses they heard from the Prophet. They carefully listened to the Prophet's exposition of the teachings of the Quran and imbibed the virtues which its Divine words conveyed to mankind. Some of the Prophet's merchant followers gave their wealth for the Islamic cause and it was used for buying freedom for those slaves who had accepted Islam and for spreading the Islamic Message.

In the Prophet's household, his wife, Khadijah, was a tower of strength to him, taking care of their children and freely spending her wealth for the propagation of Islam. She especially helped those Muslims who had been deprived of their sustenance and livelihood by the anti-Islam pagan rulers. As months passed, the Word of God travelled to other parts of Arabia and caused a stir amongst the Bedouin Arabs who yearned to have a glimpse of God's Prophet and to listen to his amplification of the Quranic Message. News of the

Islamic Movement in Makkah also reached the rulers in the Eastern Roman Byzantine Empire, Persia, Egypt, Abyssinia and Yemen.

In these testing times for the Muslims in Makkah, a double tragedy befell the Prophet. His Uncle, Abu Talib, and his wife, Khadijah passed away. For the Prophet, it was an irreparable loss because he loved his wife dearly and he was fond of his very helpful Uncle. The Prophet was nearing 50 years of age and the responsibilities of looking after his children, his Muslim community and the propagation of Islam were immense. He bore the pain of personal tragedy with fortitude and he pursued his Prophetic Mission with more passion and vigour. He preached Islam even in the precincts of the Kaaba, provoking the wrath and the conspiracies of Makkah's pagan rulers.

The process of the Quranic revelation to the Prophet through the Angel Gabriel continued and it gave him the strength of heart to preach Islam undeterred by heathen opposition. Out of the 23 years of his Prophetic Mission, thirteen were spent in Makkah and ten in Madina. About two-thirds of the Quran was revealed to him in Makkah and the remainder in Madina. Before he emigrated to Madina in the fiftythird year of his life, Prophet Muhammad was taken by the Angel Gabriel on a journey to the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem from where he ascended to the Heavens, met the Prophets who had preceded him and was ushered into God's presence.

Emigration to Madina

Tidings of Prophet Muhammad's Quranic teachings and his inspiring Islamic sermons, his piety and nobility and the righteous conduct of his Muslim followers reached the city of Madina which grew the tastiest dates in Arabia. It was the hometown of two major Arab tribes which traced their ancestry to Yemen, the Khazraj and the Aws, but their unending feuds and faction fights had for the past many years wrecked the peace of this pleasant oasis. Madina's Jewish community of Arab origin expected a Prophet to appear in

Madina who would usher in an era of peace. The people of Madina desperately needed a leader capable of uniting its feuding tribes and channelling their energies into collective well-being.

A group of twelve learned and eminent men from Madina met the Prophet in Makkah in AD 621 and discussed with him the message of Islam. They felt profoundly inspired and embraced Islam. They invited the Prophet and his Companions to emigrate to Madina and make it their home and to continue preaching Islam from there. The Prophet deputed one of his trusted Companions to Madina to tell the people there about Islam and the Word of God. After negotiations, spread over a whole year, with the elders of Madina, the Prophet gave orders to his followers in Makkah to emigrate to Madina where they were welcomed by its hospitable inhabitants, the Ansars. In the thirteenth year of his Prophetic Mission, the Prophet also emigrated to Madina. The journey was daunting and eventful because the Makkan rulers wanted to assassinate him but God willed otherwise and no harm touched the Prophet. In AD 622, the Prophet arrived in Madina amid a rousing welcome and a new chapter opened in the history of Islam. The Emigration--the Hijra-- to Madina by the Prophet and his Companions marked the beginning of the Islamic Hijra lunar calendar. In Madina, Islam got a propitious base to become a global religion.

Madina — The Lighthouse of Islam

The Prophet and his Muslim followers made a happy impression on the people of Madina. He had given them a pledge that henceforth Madina would be his permanent home provided they did not falter in their allegiance to God and they did not commit theft, adultery and infanticide. They had assured him solemnly that they would stand by him in peace as well as war; the Prophet reciprocated their promise of unswerving support. Madina's rich elders offered to the Prophet the hospitality of their homes but he was determined to maintain his impartiality in their festering tribal feuds otherwise his role as a peace-maker would have been in doubt. He announced

that he would build a Mosque and a home for himself at the spot where his loyal camel, **Qaswa**, buckled its knees and dismounted its holy rider at the end of their historic journey to Madina— a journey for which Divine permission had been received.

One of the first acts of the Prophet, after taking up abode in Madina, was to build at this very spot the first Mosque of Islam and a house for himself and his wives who entered his life after Khadijah's death in Makkah. The Muslim community joined him in its construction and it was completed in a remarkably short time. The Prophet gave Madina its first House of God. From the Prophet's Mosque radiated the Light of Islam, casting its glow over the city and beyond. It was the matrix of Islam, the symbol of God's Omnipotence and His Grace. It was a spiritual magnet that drew the nascent Muslim community in Madina to pray in it five times a day to invoke God's blessing. The Mosque was the base for the Prophet's supremely important undertaking of establishing the world's first Islamic State in Madina.

Reconciling factions

In the line of divinely-inspired statesmanship, the Prophet gradually reconciled the feuding tribal factions in Madina; many accepted Islam spontaneously. He forged fraternal bonds between the Muslim emigrants from Makkah, the **Mohajireen**, and the indigenous inhabitants of Madina who embraced Islam, the Ansars or the **Helpers**. He reminded them from time to time that the holy Quran's injunction to them was that Muslims should treat and respect each other as brothers and he advised the Muslim Emigrants on the ways of earning a livelihood, without being a burden on their hosts. Most of them knew many skills and trades and it took them not long before they were gainfully employed.

The Prophet built such durable bridges of understanding and cooperation between the Emigrants and the host community that

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they soon became an inseparable and trusting brotherhood of Islam. Madina's economy was largely pastoral but it had many thriving merchants; some of them belonged to influential Jewish families. When the civic elders of Madina entrusted the Prophet with its governance, he gave an impetus to agriculture and commerce, encouraged trans-border trade and many useful vocations which increased the city's economic resources and yielded benefits for the old and new inhabitants alike. Their fraternal Islamic bonds were strengthened by inter-marriages and warm personal relationships. After consulting a fairly representative cross-section of the city's population, the Prophet drew up and enforced the Covenant of Madina to govern the relations between the Islamic State and its Muslim and non-Muslim citizens, setting out their rights and duties. Under his accord with the elders of the Jewish community in Madina, the Prophet gave them equal status with the Muslims and they agreed that they would fight together with the Muslims for Madina's defence. This historic Covenant constitutes an important element in Islam's constitutional law.

While establishing the infrastructure of the Islamic State and uniting the people of Madina within the framework of a peaceful and orderly society, the Prophet reinforced the institution of the Mosque for the spiritual and material good of the Muslim community. When the Prophet preached Islam in Makkah, he and his followers turned towards the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in their prayer. Eighteen months after his emigration to Madina, he instructed the Muslims to turn in the direction of the holy Kaaba in Makkah while saying their prayers to God. Some converts to Islam, who showed an interest in missionary work, were sheltered and given food from the Prophet's household in a part of the Mosque; as they slept on benches they were called "the People of the Bench". They learnt the Quran by heart and helped in the upkeep of the Mosque. Trained by the Prophet, they became the nucleus of Islam's missionary corps for carrying God's Word to lands near and far.

Defence of the Islamic State

As the wealth and prosperity of Madina grew under the Prophet's stewardship and his Islamic influence spread beyond its confines, the pagan rulers of Makkah began hatching new conspiracies against the Islamic State, mobilizing their nearby confederate tribes for war against Madina. They put pressure on the desert Bedouins, who lived between Makkah and Madina on the arterial trade routes, to attack the Muslim Emigrants. The Prophet, who kept himself well-informed about the war-like moves and plots of the Makkan pagans, took prompt measures to strengthen Madina's defences.

Battle of Badr

In the second year of the Islamic Hijra Era, the Prophet learnt that the Makkan rulers were about to launch an attack on Madina. During the fasting month of Ramzan, the Prophet led 313 armed Muslims from Madina to the village of Badr, about fifty miles to the north-west, to face the Makkan army of a thousand men. As a watering place for the trade caravans between Makkah and Syria, Badr was of strategic importance. Many of the Emigrant fighters from Madina felt aggrieved by the gross injustices done to them by Makkah's rulers, especially the confiscation of their houses and farms in and around Makkah. In the battle at Badr between the Islamic contingent of 313 warriors and a thousand Makkah soldiers, whose leaders aimed at the destruction of Islam's new base in Madina, the Prophet's qualities as an army commander were put to test. Sitting under a small thatched canopy with a sword in one hand and an arrow in the other, the Prophet gave directions to his fearless fighters to blunt the attack of the enemy and he constantly prayed to God for His support.

Ranged against the Muslims were many of Makkah's renowned and battle-tested warriors; some of them were the blood relations of the Muslim defenders. In the battle fought on the 17th of Ramadan, the Muslims showed exemplary valour and routed the Makkan army.

It was a signal victory for Islam; the Muslim loss of life was very small. The Prophet treated the Makkan prisoners-of-war with magnanimity; they were allowed to return to Makkah after their relatives had ransomed them. As the Prophet of peace and mercy, he rejected the suggestion mooted by the hawks in his camp that the captives should be put to death as was often the fate of the vanquished in that period of man's history. The Prophet's policy was to avoid war and bloodshed and he went into battle only when the Islamic State of Madina was attacked. The Muslim victors of Badr were given a fair share in the booty by the Prophet; they were feted by the people of Madina. So long as they lived, the Islamic State honoured each one of them as a hero of Islam.

Battle of Uhud

The Makkan defeat at Badr incensed the pagan rulers. Two of the Prophet's implacable enemies, Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab, suffered a miserable death. Abu Jahl was slain at Badr and Abu Lahab was shocked to death when news of the humiliating defeat reached him in Makkah. Abu Sufyan, distantly related to the Prophet, took over the command of Makkan's pagans and prepared for a war of revenge against the Islamic State. He led an army of three thousand Makkan soldiers for the attack on Madina. The Muslim defenders, under the Prophet's command, halted the enemy's force eight miles outside Madina on the slopes of Mount Uhud. Badly outnumbered, the 700 Muslim warriors were in a do-or-die mood. The Makkans reeled under the fierce charge of the Muslims who mistakenly thought that the enemy was on the run and the lure of booty made them deviate from the battle orders given to them by the Prophet, their commander. Taking advantage of the ensuing confusion in Muslim ranks, the Makkan cavalry charged from the rear and inflicted heavy losses on the Muslims, injuring the Prophet. In a defensive manoeuvre, which the Prophet himself directed despite his bleeding wound, the Muslims showed epic valour and the enemy left for Makkah without capturing even the outworks of Madina. The Islamic State was safe.

The Muslim death toll in the battle of Uhud, though much less than the enemy's heavy loss, cast gloom in many Muslim homes in Madina. But the Prophet's inspiring leadership and the comfort and succour he gave to the bereaved families soothed their suffering and Madina's population remained loyal to Islam. A new Makkan attack was apprehended and the people of Madina joined the Prophet in strengthening the city's defences. This time, as a larger enemy force was expected, the Prophet drew up a battle plan based on ringing Madina with a line of trenches to ward off the onslaught of the revanchist Makkans. After consulting his companions and Madina's elders, the Prophet ordered the immediate digging of deep ditches around the city. For many days and nights, the Prophet laboured hard with hundreds of his followers in digging the trenches.

Battle of the Trench

The Makkan army, numbering ten thousand soldiers, was stunned by the trenches; it had no experience of this mode of defence. It laid siege to Madina because the trenches and the bravery of the defenders prevented it from undertaking a frontal assault. God was on the side of the Muslims and, as if by a miracle, hurricane-force winds one day swept away the Makkan army's camps and their food supply from Makkah was disrupted. Muslim archers and swordsmen gave an excellent account of their fighting qualities and they obeyed the Prophet's command faithfully. After a month-long siege, the enemy retreated to Makkah. The Islamic State won the day. In the nearly two dozen major and minor battles, which the Muslims fought under the Prophet's command for the defence of Islam, his sword shed no human blood. After the battle of the trench, the tribe of Bani Qurayzah, which had intrigued with the Makkan pagans to stab the Islamic State in the back, was punished. The Muslims, who went into battle, were fearless fighters; if they won they were honoured heroes of Islam; if they were killed they were martyrs in the service of God and went to Paradise.

Treaty of Hudaibya

In spite of periodic forays in the direction of Madina, the Makkans failed to gain a single victory. By now, they seemed to be war-weary; the Prophet also wanted peace for Madina and more time for the propagation of Islam. He, therefore, signed an armistice treaty with the Makkan envoys at Hudaibya, a village on the way to the Kaaba. Besides establishing a truce, it permitted the Muslims to perform the pilgrimage at the Kaaba annually for three days from the following year. Some of the Prophet's companions objected to certain provisions of the agreement but the Prophet convinced them that under the circumstances the accord was necessary and they obeyed him. The treaty of Hudaibya was, indeed, an act of statesmanship on the part of the Prophet; it paved the way for the eventual capture of Makkah by the forces of Islam under his leadership.

Foreign Rulers Invited to enter Islam

The Prophet and the Islamic State observed every word of the treaty of Hudaibya with the Makkans. It reduced the tension between Makkah and Madina and some bilateral trade resulted in the wake of this accord. People-to-people contact led to the spread of knowledge in Makkah about the honesty and decency of the Muslims of Madina and the blessings of the Islamic Faith. The period of truce ushered in by this treaty gave more time to the Prophet to spread the message of Islam and to consolidate the system of government which he had devised and established in Madina's Islamic State. He wrote letters to the reigning monarchs and rulers of the great nations of the day, inviting them to embrace Islam, the religion of peace and human brotherhood. The Negus of Abyssinia acknowledged the Prophet of Islam as God's Messenger. The ruler of Egypt gratefully appreciated the Prophet's Islamic invitation and sent him a number of valuable presents as a mark of respect. The East Roman Byzantine Empire's Caesar had the Prophet's letter read in his court in Jerusalem. The Emperor of Persia showed disrespect and tore the Prophet's letter; he was punished and within a few

years his Persian Empire collapsed. In less than two decades, Persia became a dominion of Islam.

The originals of some of the Prophet's letters inviting foreign rulers to enter Islam are still preserved in the museums of certain Islamic countries. The Prophet's emissaries, who carried these letters to foreign courts, also conveyed the Arabic text's translation to the recipient. As the Messenger of God, it was the Prophet's duty to spread His Word to every part of the globe and these letters to the high and mighty of the world were to propagate Islam as a global religion. The Prophet's letters mirrored the spirit of Islam — to let all of mankind benefit from the spiritual and temporal blessings of the Faith. It was God's will that within a few decades many of the countries ruled by the recipients of the Prophet's Islamic letters became a part of the Empire of Islam. The work of spreading Islam gained more speed when Muslim missionaries from Madina, trained by the Prophet in the Mosque, embarked on their Islamic missions in Arabia and the lands beyond.

Victory at Khaybar

The Truce of Hudaibya also gave time to the Islamic State to soften the opposition of those tribes which in the past had damaged its interests by intrigues or by hostile action. The town of Khaybar, 70 miles to the North of Madina, had a string of forts in which some Jewish clans lived and they had been on the warpath against Madina's Islamic State. The Prophet's army, in a month-long campaign, defeated them, and their forts in Khaybar and its neighbourhood were seized. Initially, the Prophet offered them peace but when they mobilised more than 20,000 men to give battle to the much smaller Muslim force from Madina under his command, the storming of their forts became unavoidable. One by one, their fortresses fell to the Muslims; the Prophet's companions, particularly Abu Bakar, Omar and Ali, fought bravely in the battles at Khaybar. Ali, married to the Prophet's loving daughter, Fatima, won renown by smashing the locked gate of an almost impregnable fortress and forcing its Jewish garrison to surrender.

Although the Prophet's army was victorious, he showed immense generosity to the Jewish tribes, including the rich and powerful Bani Nadir, by allowing them to continue cultivating their farmlands in the Khaybar region provided they gave rent in the form of agricultural produce to Madina. Inside the forts, the Prophet's soldiers found many copies of the Jewish holy book, the Torah; the Prophet ordered that due respect be given to the Jewish scripture and the holy books should be handed over to the Jewish tribe for use in their synagogue. A tribal woman in Khaybar tried to poison the Prophet by serving poisoned meat to him but he detected it in time and spat the poisonous morsel. But his companion, Bishr of the Khazraj tribe from Madina, ate a morsel and died on the spot. Questioned by the Prophet, the woman admitted her guilt, saying that she bore a grudge because her father and her husband had perished in the battle with the Prophet's Muslim army. The Prophet pardoned her. In the battle of Khaybar, the Prophet and his warriors tested new engines of war for smashing the barred doors of heavily-fortified strongholds. As in the battle of Uhud, in the battles in Khaybar, too, a number of Muslim women, including the wives of the Prophet and his Companions, did nursing duties, carrying water to the troops, bandaging wounds and collecting arrows for use by the Muslim archers against the enemy. On the way back from Khaybar to Madina, the Prophet's army pacified some recalcitrant tribes; all of them were treated with magnanimity and mutually – beneficial arrangements were worked out with them.

After the successful Khaybar campaign, the Prophet spent eight months in Madina; it was now the seventh year of the Islamic Hijra Calendar. In compliance with the Treaty of Hudaibya, the Prophet and his Companions visited the Kaaba in Makkah for three days to perform the pilgrimage. Many of Makkah's residents, fearing reprisals by the Muslim pilgrims, locked their houses and moved to the outskirts of the city. When they returned, after the Muslims headed for Madina, they found their houses and their valuables untouched. Observing the terms of the treaty, the Prophet and his

men carried no weapons with them into Makkah and they left the city the moment three days were passed.

Battle of Muthah

In the following year, the Prophet's emissary to the Governor of Basra in Iraq was murdered by a tribe which enjoyed the protection of the Byzantine Empire. The provocation was so grave that the Prophet ordered an army contingent to proceed from Madina to the town of Muthah on the way to Syria. Murdering an envoy of the Islamic State was a crime which could not go unpunished. The Muslim contingent of about three thousand men was outnumbered by the enemy force of two hundred thousand warriors. A veteran military commander, Khalid bin Walid, who was a recent convert to Islam and who had taken over command of the Muslim contingent after its two commanders were slain at Muthah, succeeded in extricating the Muslim troops from the enemy's pincer move and they returned to Madina. Amongst those martyred at Muthah was Khadijah's freed slave, Zayd, for whom the Prophet had immense affection.

Makkans breach Treaty

Although the Muslims stood by the Treaty of Hudaibya, Makkah's pagan rulers began violating it. They incited certain Arab tribes which were under their influence to attack Madina and those tribes which had forged alliances with the Islamic State. Warriors from a pro-Makkah tribe, the Bani Bakr, attacked a pro-Madina tribe, the Bani Khuzaah, which had been traditionally friendly to the Prophet's Hashmite clan. Bani Bakr's provocation reached its gravest pitch when its chieftain killed an innocent pilgrim from the Bani Khuzaah in the sanctuary of the Kaaba and the leaders of the Quraysh did not prevent this heinous sacrilege inside the sacred shrine. The elders of the Bani Khuzaah rushed to Madina and sought the help and protection of the Islamic State in facing their enemy and the Makkan instigators.

The Prophet sent his scouts to make thorough investigations, and, on the basis of their report, he felt convinced that Bani Bakr and their Makkan allies were the culprits. It was now in the knowledge of the Prophet that the leaders of the Quraysh were covertly leaving no stone unturned to undermine the stability of the Islamic State and to ruin its economy. The provocation from the Makkan rulers was so serious that the Islamic State was compelled to take punitive action against the devious Junta of the Quraysh and their allies.

Islam's Makkan Victory: Pardon and Mercy

The Chief of the Quraysh tribe, Abu Sufyan, visited Madina to seek the renewal of the Treaty of Hudaibya but the Prophet was so displeased by its numerous violations by the Makkan rulers that he returned empty-handed to Makkah. The Prophet ordered mobilisation of the Muslim forces in Madina. On the tenth day of the fasting month of Ramadan in the 8th year of the Islamic Hijra era (January, 630), the Prophet, riding on his loyal and battle-tested camel, Qaswa, led an Army of more than ten thousand Muslim warriors in the direction of Makkah. He instructed his troops to halt at a place ten miles outside Makkah and set up camp. A harbinger of Peace, the Prophet offered peace to the Makkah rulers if they surrendered and repented. The sight of ten thousand fully-armed Muslim fighters sent fear into Makkan hearts and even the hawks in their midst deemed it wise to accept their leader, Abu Sufyan's advice to surrender on the best terms possible. His daughter, Umm Habiba, was one of the Prophet's wives. Makkah's arrogant rulers were humbled; they had no will to fight and their forces were in complete disarray. Abu Sufyan and the Quraysh surrendered and begged for mercy and pardon from the Prophet. What the Prophet did in this hour of Islam's magnificent victory was an act of superb magnanimity unprecedented in the history of man. The Prophet forgave the Makkans and their rulers, granted them a general amnesty, pledged the safety of life, limb and property to those who had surrendered and ap-

pointed a Makkan as the city's Governor after he embraced Islam. He even bestowed upon the Makkans the houses and lands of the Muslim emigres which they had usurped after their emigration to Madina. But he offered no concession on a supremely important matter of Islamic principle — the immediate destruction of the 360 idols in the Kaaba.

The triumphant entry of the Prophet and his legion of Islam in Makkah was by far the most glorious event in his scintillating career as God's Messenger and the founder and head of the world's first Islamic State. Yet there were no trumpets of victory nor the massacre of the defeated enemy. As the Prophet of Peace and Humanity, he spared the lives and property of those who had tormented him and his followers during the thirteen years of his Prophetic Mission in Makkah. As the benefactor of Mankind and a Mercy unto the world, he hated bloodshed and he had great respect for human life. Even in this hour of absolute victory over the forces of evil, the sanctity of human life was uppermost in his thoughts. His victorious soldiers, obeying his orders for discipline, restraint and compassion, entered Makkah not as avenging conquerors but as peaceful and dignified soldiers in the service of God.

The Prophet sought no compensation for usurped Muslim property and no captives: even those who had murdered Muslims in past years were pardoned. The cleansing of the Kaaba, the smashing of the hundreds of stone deities, which were the hated symbols of the idolatrous life of the Makkan pagans, and the restoration of the holy shrine's monotheistic character was the Prophet's principal objective. Reciting aloud the Quranic verse that "Truth has triumphed and Evil has been wiped out", the Prophet and his Companions destroyed the idols in the Kaaba. Once again it was the House of God with all the sanctity which Prophet Abraham had given to it in bygone centuries. From the minarets of the holy Mosque he built now echoed Muezzin Bilal's resounding call for prayer and his chant of "God is great".

The Prophet and his Companions prayed in gratitude to the Almighty Allah for crowning their holy mission with the laurels of success. Impressed by the Prophet's mercy, thousands of Makkans embraced Islam; many of them were to emerge in the years to come as the heroes of Islam, extending its frontiers to the farthest corners of the world. The Prophet did not forget the pledge he had given to the people of Madina when he emigrated to it—that it will be his permanent home. Makkah, the city of his birth, which now lay at his feet in abject surrender, failed to tempt him. Madina continued to be the Prophet's home, the citadel of the Islamic State, and to it he returned.

The Prophet appointed a Makkan convert to Islam, who belonged to the Abdu Shams clan of the Quraysh, as the Governor of Makkah and left the city's administration in the hands of the Makkans who had entered Islam. The Prophet left none of his soldiers to police Makkah. The Prophet welcomed Abu Sufyan and his two sons in the Army of Islam and they gave proof of their valour in the battles which followed the Makkan triumph of Islam; one of Abu Sufyan's sons was destined to be a Caliph of Islam. The Prophet pardoned Abu Sufyan's cruel wife, Hind, despite her years of implacable hostility to Islam and the mutilation of the dead body of the Prophet's dear Uncle, Hamza, under her orders in the battle of Uhud. The Prophet also forgave the sons of two of his ruthless Makkan persecutors, Abu Jahal and Abu Lahab, and they willingly joined the Islamic legion. One of them, Utbah, was forced by his father, Abu Lahab, to repudiate the Prophet's daughter, Ruqayyah, in Makkah when he began preaching Islam to the Makkans.

The Prophet spared the lives of some Satanic fibsters and pagan poets of Makkah who had for years composed and recited vulgar poems to lampoon him and his Faith. These used to be sung to the Makkan troops at the time of their attacks on Madina. The Prophet and his soldiers did not take even a gram of silver or gold from any inhabitant of the vanquished city; they made no demand for repara-

tions from the Makkans. The idols broken by the iconoclastic soldiers of Islam in the Kaaba were burnt to ashes; Hubal, the king of the idols in the pagan pantheon, was smashed to pieces. The stone goddesses in the ancient pagan temple of al-Uzza at Nakhla, not far from Makkah, were reduced to a heap of dust by a posse of Muslim soldiers. It symbolised the defeat of the primitive cult of idolatry in its weirdest citadel in Arabia. When the Prophet and his Muslim legion were leaving Makkah, more than two thousand new Makkan converts to Islam willingly joined it to fight for the Islamic cause under his command. It was the fasting month of Ramadan and their Islamic fervour was so great that they also joined their brothers-in-faith from Madina in fasting and prayers to God. The Prophet's dazzling victory at Makkah — an epitome of angelic mercy and compassion — opened a glorious chapter in the history of Islam.

Spreading Islam

Islam's Makkan victory made a deep impact on the people of Arabia. The interest of non-Muslim tribes in the religion of Islam and their respect for the Prophet soared. A number of tribes in the villages around Makkah and in the far flung parts of the Arabian Peninsula entered Islam. But some tribes remained hostile and one of them was the Hawazin whose leaders had gathered some 20,000 warriors in the valley of Awtas, to the north of Taif, to give battle to the Islamic legion in the wake of Makkah's surrender. The Muslim force, beefed up by the addition of two thousand Makkan soldiers, defeated the Hawazin army in a battle in the village of Hunayn. But the Prophet treated the defeated Hawazin clans with great generosity; he released some 6,000 prisoners-of-war, amongst whom were many women and children. In particular, he was most merciful to the clan of Bani Saad ibn Bakr to whom belonged the Prophet's wet-nurse, Halima. He recognised his foster sister, Shayama, now an old woman of seventy, amongst the Hawazin captives all of whom he set free. He showed respect to the aged woman and gave her many presents. She embraced Islam and

returned to her Bedouin family. The Prophet and his army marched back to Madina and on the way home they received affirmations of allegiance from more tribes.

When news reached the Prophet that the Roman Byzantine Army was preparing for war and a surprise attack on Madina, he lost no time in leading a Makkan contingent to the strategic town of Tabuk on the way to Syria to engage the Roman force. When the Prophet was encamped at Tabuk, he learnt on good authority that the Roman Army had no marching orders. On the journey back to Madina, the Muslim soldiers persuaded the leaders of a Christian tribe near Tabuk to be friendly towards the Islamic State and they agreed to a peace arrangement with the Muslims. A number of other tribes on the way swore fealty to the Islamic State and many embraced Islam.

On his return to Madina, the Prophet was deeply grieved by the news of the death of the Negus of Abyssinia. In sorrowful words, the Prophet gave the sad news to the Muslim community in a congregation in the Madina Mosque, describing the Negus as a true friend of the Muslims. The Muslims, whom he had given asylum when they sought refuge in his kingdom from Makkan persecution in the early years of Islam, had now returned to Madina and they also joined the Prophet's prayer for the Negus.

The Christians

The Prophet was pleased when Adi, a Christian tribal chief whose Tayy tribe lived north-east of Madina, entered Islam and became an ally of the Islamic State. His father, Hatim Tayy, was a legend in Arabia for his generosity, poetry and piety. Amongst the Tayy tribesmen, some were Christian but quite many were polytheists who worshipped idols in the temple of Fuls. A Muslim contingent led by Ali destroyed the idols and brought some captives to Madina. Amongst them was Hatim Tayy's daughter. The Prophet treated her with respect and spoke in praise of her father. With an

escort and many presents, the Prophet sent her back to her tribe. She appealed to her brother, Adi, to go to Madina and meet the Prophet. Adi was so deeply impressed by the Prophet's personality and his exposition of Islam that he became a Muslim and many of his tribe entered Islam.

The Christians of Najran in South Arabia were already allies of the Islamic State; their Church leaders, numbering sixty, had met the Prophet in Madina and signed an agreement which pledged the Islamic State's protection to them and their Churches. As they were "People of the Book", the Prophet showed them hospitality and consideration during their stay in Madina. Islam's soldiers were under strict orders from the Prophet never to force any one to embrace Islam because the Quran specifically says that there is "no compulsion in religion". In keeping with the Prophet's command Muslim soldiers did not violate the sanctity of Churches and Synagogues even in the heat of battle. The Prophet abided by the accords he reached with those Jewish tribes in Arabia which opted for peace and friendship with the Islamic State, such as the Jews of Bani Auf.

Some chronicles of the period show that Emperor Heraclius of the Christian Byzantine Empire, based at Constantinople, had a dream in which he saw the likeness of Prophet Muhammad and he wanted to enter into an alliance with the Islamic State but his Army Generals were not in favour of it. They mistakenly thought that they would halt Islam's march on the borders of Syria. Nonetheless, Heraclius gave respect to the Prophet's emissary and had his letter, inviting him to join Islam, read in his court.

Consolidating the Islamic State

Back in Madina, the Prophet addressed himself to the task of consolidating the spiritual and temporal gains of the Islamic State. In Islam, the Church and the State are one; God's law and His commandments, as revealed to Prophet Muhammad in the form of the holy Quran, are the fountainhead of Divine guidance for the Islamic State and its rulers in the spiritual as well as the mundane realms.

While warding off the external threats and dangers to the Islamic State, the Prophet paid due attention to the missionary requirements for the propagation of Islam, the religious needs of the Muslim community in Madina and beyond, the devising of institutions to give permanence to the commandments of the Faith and the establishment of the Islamic State's administrative and judicial structure. That the Prophet was able to accomplish all these herculean tasks in the short span of a little more than a decade during his captaincy of the Islamic State in Madina and to clear the decks for Islam to emerge as a global religion and a world power constitutes a miracle in the chronicles of man's history.

The Prophet supervised the collection of the Quranic revelations to him in order to give them the format of a book. It had been the duty of those followers of the Prophet who had the gift of a good memory to learn by heart the Quranic verses when they were recited by the Prophet. Scribes then wrote them on parchments, leather sheets and bone slates and the Prophet made sure that the rendering was accurate. He had trained more than forty scribes and calligraphers to handle the writing workload of the Faith and the Islamic State. The role of the Prophet's Mosque as the spiritual and temporal base of Islam and the Muslim polity underwent vast expansion and acquired new dimensions with each passing year. The "People of the Bench", trained in the Prophet's Mosque under his own care, fanned out on their missionary assignments in the service of Islam in lands beyond Madina.

The structuring of the Islamic State's foundational institutions, the forging of its administrative machinery and the training of its personnel, the requirements of the economy and public finance, the fashioning of the judicial system, the fostering of education and learning, the promotion of the people's weal and catering to their civic needs and the conduct of relations with foreign governments were some of the areas of governance which now received the Prophet's urgent attention. The Quran and the Prophet said that he

was mortal; advancing age and the rigours of desert warfare weighed heavily on his health. But the Prophet was in a hurry; unmindful of the drain on his physical energies, he devoted every moment of his life to the Islamic Mission with which the Angel Gabriel had entrusted him in the name of God in the cave of Hira in the fortieth year of his life. He was now sixty-two.

Emancipation of Women

The Prophet's Message of Islam was particularly appealing to the humble and the poor, the exploited and the oppressed, the dispossessed and the disadvantaged sections of society. In the pre-Islam period in Arabia, the treatment meted out to women in the male-dominated society was undignified and cruel. A man could have as many wives and as many concubines as he liked. For many rich Makkans, specially the tribal chieftains and their underlings, women and wine were their ruling passions. In some homes, women were treated as chattel. Some heartless fathers killed their female progeny soon after birth. The Prophet of Islam condemned this inhuman practice and the holy Quran outlawed it.

With the advent of the Islamic Order under the Prophet, the emancipation of women in Arabia began. The Quran and the teachings of the Prophet gave women a vast number of rights on a par with men in the polity of Islam. Many of them were rights which women in many Christian countries did not enjoy right upto the early 20th Century A.D. The rights Islam gave to Muslim women included the right to own property, the right to have a share in the family inheritance, the right to give evidence in a court of law, the right to engage in trade and commerce and other sectors of economic activity, and the right to divorce and to claim alimony from the husband. Islam gave marriage the status of a sacrament and a legal contract, defining the rights and obligations of the husband and the wife. In an age and in a country in which unlimited polygamous marriages were allowed to a man, the Quran, in the closing years of the Prophet's life, placed curbs on polygamy by laying down the law

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that a man should not have more than four wives at a time on the condition that he should treat them equally. In deciding family disputes brought to his Court, the Prophet insisted on hearing the woman's side of the case also. What greater proof of the Prophet's immense respect for women and motherhood can there be than his teaching that "Paradise lies under the feet of your mother."

The Prophet's Family

More than a year after the death of Khadijah in Makkah at the age of 65, the Prophet, who was then 50, married a 50-year-old widow, Sawdah bint Zamah, who took care of his home and his children. He also married Abu Bakr's daughter, Ayesha, younger in years, to forge family ties with his close Companion.

In Madina, eight virtuous ladies entered the Prophet's household through holy matrimony. Six of them — Hafsa bint Umar, Zainab bint Khuzyamah, Umm Salmah bint Abu Umayyah, Umm Habiba bint Abu Sufyan, Safyah bint Huyah and Maymunah bint al Harith — were widows whose splintered lives were rehabilitated by the protection, respectability and security they got as lawful wives in the Prophet's home. The other two — Zainab bint Jash and Juwayriyyah bint al-Harith — were previously married but were victims of tragedies in past years. Marriage to the Prophet, with their consent, gave them shelter, hope and cheer. The last lady to enter the Prophet's household in Madina was a noble-familied Egyptian, Mariah, who was sent as a present to him by Egypt's Roman Governor, the Muqawqis. The Prophet, who hated slavery and concubinage, married her to foster friendly relations between Madina and Egypt.

The Prophet's wives were ladies of virtue and piety; they worshipped God and they were faithful to Islam and the Prophet. They joined the Prophet in many battles for the defence of Islam and did nursing duties. They assisted the Prophet in his Islamic missionary work and helped Muslim women and children through acts of

charity. Soon they became the highly respected "Mothers of the Islamic Community" in Madina. Their matrimonial ties with the Prophet were useful in winning over the support of their respective tribes for Madina's Islamic State. Even after his death, his surviving wives continued their missionary work for Islam and assisted in the compilation of his Sayings for the Shariah law of Islam.

The Prophet's two sons born to Khadijah, Qasim and Abdullah, died during their childhood years in Makkah. His four daughters from Khadijah — Zaynab, Ruqayah, Umm Kulsum and Fatima — survived their mother and the Prophet loved them. He married them to noble-familied Makkans. Zaynab, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulsum died during his lifetime; Fatima, Ali's wife, died six months after the Prophet's demise. None of his other wives, except Mariah, bore him any children. She gave birth to a son whom the Prophet named Ibrahim but he died when he was 18 months' old. The Prophet was a very loving father and a caring and affectionate husband; he took a keen interest in the proper upbringing and education of his own children and his step-children as well.

In the age in which the Prophet lived, polygamy and concubinage were widely practised in Arabia and other countries. Many of God's Prophets mentioned in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Scriptures, such as Noah, Solomon, Jacob, David and Abraham contracted polygamous marriages. For a quarter of a century, Prophet Muhammad, while he was married to Khadijah, 15 years his senior, led a strictly monogamous life. A year after her death, two ladies joined him in holy wedlock in Makkah. A few years after his Emigration to Madina, the martyrdom of a number of his Muslim followers in the battles fought for the defence of Islam made many women widows and their children orphans. To give protection and sustenance, the Prophet married some of them and encouraged his Companions to marry the others. Most of them were of Makkan origin and had they lived in Makkah their tribes would have taken care of them and their orphan children but forced them to give up

Islam. Instead of condemning female prisoners of-war to concubinage, which he detested, the Prophet married two of them with their consent after they had embraced Islam and encouraged his followers to marry such women and not to make them their concubines. In the closing years of the Prophet's life in Madina came a Quranic Revelation strictly restricting the maximum number of wives at a time for a Muslim male to four, provided he treats them justly and equally. This was a curb on the practice of polygamy; it was a part of Islam's social and economic emancipation of women.

Freeing the Slaves

The Prophet utterly hated the well-entrenched institution of slavery. He freed Khadija's slave, Zayd, soon after their wedding and treated him like a son. He encouraged his Companions to give freedom to their slaves and help free other slaves. He would have completely outlawed slavery but weighty economic and social considerations, relevant to the age and society in which he lived, stood in the way. The teachings of the Quran and his own conduct left the Muslims in no doubt that he disliked slavery and he favoured the freeing of slaves. By inducting Bilal, a freed slave, into the brotherhood of the Prophet's early Companions and by designating him as the Muezzin — the caller to prayer — of the Prophet's Mosque in Madina, Prophet Muhammad gave the most convincing proof of his faith in the dignity and equality of man, his opposition to slavery and his sublime teaching that Islam knows no barriers of race, colour, clime and tongue. The Quran's ruling was that a part of the Zakat tax collection from Muslims could be used for buying freedom for the slaves. Islam thus devised an institutional support system for the eradication of slavery.

Haj pilgrimage and Sermon on Mount Arafat

The Prophet had the premonition that he was nearing the completion of his Prophetic Mission on earth and that his date with his Maker was not far away. It was the eleventh year of the Islamic Hijra

calendar (AD 632). Leading many thousands of Muslims, including his wives and his Companions from Madina, the Prophet journeyed to Makkah for the annual Haj pilgrimage at the Kaaba whose monotheistic glory as the Abrahamic House of God had been restored by the Muslims. It was the largest congregation of pilgrims in the Kaaba's centuries-long history; nearly 100,000 Muslims were present. Their feeling of spiritual joy and elation over the pilgrimage was tinged with sadness when the Prophet told them that he was mortal and that it may be his last Haj.

On the occasion of the last Haj pilgrimage of his life, the Prophet went up to Mount Arafat, overlooking the Kaaba, and gave what was the most inspiring sermon of his life. In the beauty and grace of its language, the nobility of thought, the force of expression, the Niagra of Heavenly inspiration and in its universal appeal, the Prophet's historic Sermon on Mount Arafat remains unmatched in the annals of human eloquence. His appeal to the Muslims was for unfaltering faith in God and the holy Quran and for maintaining the unity and brotherhood of Islam, rising above the earthly and factious considerations of race and colour. The Prophet made an impassioned plea for honouring the human rights enjoined by Islam, for showing justice and respect to women and for freeing the slaves and treating them humanely. He banned the cruel institution of usury. In the corpus of the Shariah — the Prophet's Sayings, Traditions and Conduct — his last Haj sermon has a place of eminence because in it he laid down not only a set of commandments for Muslims to follow, in addition to what the Quran ordained, but he also announced the completion of his Prophetic Mission, having conveyed the whole of God's Message to mankind. Soon after the Prophet's last Haj sermon, the process of the Divine revelation of the Holy Quran to him was completed. Prophet Muhammad was the last Messenger of God and he had delivered to mankind God's Word in the shape of the Quran. The Prophet then returned to Madina to prepare for the journey to the Hereafter.

Death

After he returned to Madina from the Haj pilgrimage at the Kaaba in Makkah, the Prophet busied himself in the affairs of the Islamic State, giving the last touches to its administrative structure and to the arrangements for the propagation of Islam. When border trouble was reported to him from the vicinity of Syria, the Prophet mobilised a large Muslim contingent for being sent to the turbulent area under the command of a young warrior, Usman, son of Zayd, Khadijah's freed slave, who was martyred in the battle of Muthah while in command of the Muslim force from Madina.

Before the Prophet gave the marching orders, he was stricken by high fever but he went to the Mosque, wrapped in a blanket, to say his prayers. Despite fever and a splitting headache, which afflicted him for five days, the Prophet did not miss his prayers in the Mosque. He had told his followers that, like all other human beings, he was mortal and the angel of death would claim him some day. One of his last acts was to advise the Muslims, after a congregational prayer, that they should never worship his grave or the grave of any one of his Companions because worship is due only to the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth, the Master of the Day of Judgement, the Merciful and Compassionate God. On a day of painful illness, he asked one of his very devoted Companions, Abu Bakr, to lead the congregational prayer in the Mosque. In his wife Ayesha's apartment, as she held his aching head in her lap, the Prophet called Fatima, his loving daughter and Ali's wife, and told her to give away in charity the few gold sovereigns she held in trust from him.

It was the 12th day of Rabiul Awal in the 11th year of the Hijra. As he felt the cold hand of death, the Prophet recited many a time a prayer of gratitude to the Almighty Allah and uttered words of loving farewell to his dear and near ones and to the Community of Islam. His eyes opened for a moment and a serene smile and a murmur of celestial words beamed from his lips and then there was a silence — death's silence which announces to the world of the living that a

man has shed his earthly robes and passed into the Eternal World of the Heavens. The Prophet was now with his Creator, having completed his life's mission on earth — the Islamic Mission whose reverberations have echoed in the corridors of time for the past fourteen centuries and whose imprints have shaped the destiny of Muslims in generation after generation.

As was the Prophet's wish, he was buried in Madina on the day of his death and laid to rest in a grave dug inside the adobe house where he breathed his last and where he had lived for the most part of his life in Madina. The entire population of the city was rent by grief over the Prophet's death and there was a sea of humanity when the funeral prayers were said for him. The Prophet left no riches — except the horse he rode, the swords he carried in battle and a plot of land. According to the Islamic lunar Calendar, he was 63 years of age when he died.

It goes to the credit of the Prophet that his priceless heritage to the Muslim posterity — the Islamic State he built and nourished in Madina — had by then acquired such solid and durable foundations that within thirty-six hours of his demise, his successor, Abu Bakr, was chosen by consensus as the first Caliph of Islam. There was no succession struggle; no swords were drawn and no blood was shed. The transfer of power to the new incumbent was smooth and orderly and the people of Madina, including the Prophet's other Companions, promptly acknowledged Abu Bakr as the Caliph and Head of the Islamic State. If the Prophet had wished he could have named his successor but one can surmise that he did not do so deliberately because he wanted the Islamic community — the Muslim Ummah — to select his successor, their new leader.

The Prophet was basically a democrat and the thought of a dynastic system of leadership in an Islamic polity was not in line with his faith and conduct. As the spiritual and temporal head of the Islamic State in Madina, he denied himself the regalia and the trappings of power to which the high office he held entitled him. The

clothes he wore often had patches of his own clouting. The Mosque he built in Madina was his spiritual home; it was also the Secretariat of his Government, the supreme court of justice, the citizens' Parliament and the college for training the missionaries of Islam. Above all, it was the House of God. Yet it was a very simple and unostentatious piece of construction.

The Prophet insisted that he had not unfolded before mankind a new religion, that Islam's origin dated back to Prophet Abraham and that it was preached by all the God-sent Prophets who followed him, including Moses and Jesus. He said that he was sent by God to confirm and preach what these Prophets had said before him for the benefit of mankind. This was one of the reasons why Prophet Muhammad gave a special status to the Jews and Christians by describing them as the "People of the Book".

It was under Prophet Muhammad's dynamic and inspiring leadership that Islam became a vibrant religion with a distinctive ethos, uniting under its umbrella the spiritual and temporal dimensions of human life and fashioning the format of man's relationship with God as well as his fellow human beings. Long before the Magna Carta in England, the Prophet of Islam had drawn up and enforced the Covenant of Madina to govern the relations between the Islamic State and its citizens and between Muslims and non-Muslims. While conveying God's Message to mankind, he designed and nurtured Islam's religious institutions, formulated a body of Islamic Laws and a code of conduct for Muslims and fabricated the structure required for governing society and for administering the Islamic State.

Aside from the strength of Divine support and God's guidance to the Prophet, it was the transparent simpleness of the Islamic creed and the Prophet's exemplification of it in his teachings and conduct which caused Islam's rapid spread all over Arabia and in the neighbouring countries during his lifetime. Belief in the One and Only God and His Prophet Muhammed, prayer to Allah five times a day,

fasting during the month of Ramadan, payment of the Zakat charity tax and the Haj pilgrimage at the Kaaba in Makkah at least once in a lifetime, if one can afford it, were the five simple requirements laid down by the Quran and the Prophet for one to be a Muslim. The Prophet created no priesthood; the medium of prayer established direct communion between the Muslim and the Merciful Allah and the Quran was his Eternal Guide. As God's last Prophet and Messenger, he was God's blessing to all of mankind.

The Islamic State

In his last Haj sermon on Mount Arafat, the Prophet had quoted the last Quranic Revelation he had just received in which God informed the Muslims: "This day I have perfected for you your religion and fulfilled my favour unto you and it had been My good pleasure to choose Islam for you as your religion". The Prophet had not only delivered to mankind God's Message in its entirety but he had established the Islamic State which was soon to become an instrument for the propagation of the Divinely-perfected religion of Islam. Judged by the criteria of present-day Political Science, Madina's Islamic State under the Prophet's leadership now had all the attributes of a State — a territory, a people, a common language, a God-given Constitution, a common Faith, an administrative machinery, the sinews of economic sustenance and independence. Glowing in the fullness of its Statehood, attained in a decade of the Prophet's superb Captaincy, the Islamic State stood poised for assuming the global role which was its Divinely-charted destiny. Just as Rome, the City of the Seven Hills, spawned and bred the mighty Roman Empire in ancient times, Madina, the city of Islam's Prophet, had now become the cradle of the Islamic State and in a few years it was to mother the holy Empire of Islam in which God's Law would reign.

The Empire of Islam

It took the city of Rome from the time of its founding by Romulus in 753 B.C. almost four centuries to shape into the mighty

Roman Empire. But the Islamic State of Madina, reared by the Prophet in the third decade of the 7th Century A.D., blossomed into the inter-Continental Empire of Islam in less than a century. In AD 638, Islam's legions captured the holy city of Jerusalem and almost swept into the outworks of Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire. In a few decades Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Persia, Afghanistan, some parts of northern India, Turkestan, half of Sinkiang, Egypt and North Africa were in the lap of the Islamic Empire. By 732, the Islamic Legions had surged through Spain and extended their sway to the borders of France. Till then the world had not witnessed such a dramatic sweep of an army across so many countries and in so short a time. From the green vales of Spain to the banks of the Indus in India, the law of Islam reigned supreme over millions of people, fulfilling the Prophet's vision that mankind as a whole would benefit from God's Message in the Quran. The conquests of the sword are often ephemeral; it was Islam's conquest of the minds and souls of the vast millions who came under its umbrella which has endured the wear and tear of fourteen centuries, uniting in its fold 1.2 billion people as of today.

Chapter 2

MADINA Cradle of the Islamic State

Invitation from the Wise Men

In the 13th year of the Revelation of the holy Quran to Prophet Muhammad, he took the historic decision that he and his loyal followers should quit the infidel-ruled city of Makkah and emigrate to Madina (till then known as Yathrib); a friendly and civilised metropolis, about 290 miles to the north. Makkah's cruel pagan rulers had viciously persecuted the Muslims and reviled their God-sent Prophet. Earlier, he had permitted a group of his Makkan followers to seek refuge in Abyssinia where the noble Negus gave them asylum. Tribal elders from Madina, who heard of Prophet Muhammad's divine teachings and his impeccable conduct, met him in Makkah and invited him to make their city his home and spread the Word of God from there.

The two dominant tribes in Madina, the Aws and the Khazraj, had unending feuds which marred the peace and beauty of their home town — a pretty oasis in the vastness of the Arabian desert. Madina's elders sought the presence of Prophet Muhammad in their midst as a God-sent peace-maker and a teacher of righteousness and human brotherhood. A year before the Prophet's emigration, they had sent twelve of their learned and wise men to Makkah to meet him and they implored him to visit Madina. They were deeply impressed by his personality, by the inspiring words he spoke to articulate God's Message and they saw in him the Messenger of God whose appearance their wise ancestors had prophesied. The Prophet suggested that, to begin with, one of his trusted followers, Mosaab, should accompany them to Madina and acquaint its inhabitants with the teachings of Islam. If the people of Madina were

attracted to the Word of God, the Prophet assured them that he would go to their hospitable city. A year passed and Mosaab's missionary zeal won over the hearts of many to Islam in Madina. Seventy-five wise men from Madina then journeyed to Makkah and met the Prophet at a secret trysting place in Aqba. They repeated their invitation to the Prophet to make Madina his home and teach its people the ways of abiding peace and Godly conduct.

Terms for settling in Madina

Divine permission had come from the Heavens to Prophet Muhammad to migrate to Madina and spread the Word of God from there. The Prophet accepted the invitation of the gentle, softspoken emissaries from Madina to settle in their city provided they promised that they would worship only God, obey God's laws and commandments, never kill their female children nor illtreat their women, be truthful, honest and righteous in conduct and stand by him and his followers in testing times. He made it clear to them that he would not belong to any tribe or clan and that he would serve all those who believed in the Word of God in letter and deed.

The wise men from Madina agreed to the Prophet's conditions and sought in return the assurance that he would never quit their beloved city which he solemnly gave. Islam's history speaks of this historic covenant as the Pledge of Aqaba. It was not executed on any parchment; it was not etched on any rock; it was engraven in the hearts and souls of the inspired men and women who had exchanged the pledges of enduring comradeship in a dry river bed under the canopy of the Heavens with Angels as witnesses to an act of God. This epochal tryst in the history of Islam was a turning point in the Holy Prophet's divine mission on earth as the Messenger of God. The way to the founding of the world's first Islamic State in Madina now lay wide open.

Word went from the Prophet to his followers in Makkah and its neighbouring villages to go to Madina in small groups. At night,

bands of the Faithful — men, women and children — sought the blessing of their Prophet and slipped out of Makkah on the way to Madina. It was a perilous journey across a vast and unfriendly desert with the lurking danger of murderous attacks by their Makkan persecutors. With faith in God and the prayers of their Prophet, they rode into the darkness of the desert like little specks on the star-studded horizon.

Emigration

After all his followers had safely escaped from Makkah, Prophet Muhammad decided to undertake the fateful journey to Madina. The pagan rulers of Makkah conspired to murder him. Warned by the God he worshipped, the Prophet escaped from Makkah in the nick of time. As the murderers sent by the heathen lords of Makkah burst into his room at the dead of night, they found Ali and not the Prophet they planned to kill. Enraged by his dramatic escape from their wrath, they offered a hundred camels as a reward for his capture and sent bands of swordsmen in hot pursuit. Guided by the light of God, the Prophet and his trusted lieutenant, Abu Bakr, were ensconced in the safety of the Cave of Thaur on the outskirts of Makkah. The bloodthirsty pagans came close to the cave but the spiders' web and the pigeons' nests at its entrance convinced them that no man could dwell in such inhospitable rocks. The shield of Heavenly protection saved Prophet Muhammad and also the man who was destined to be Islam's first Caliph, Abu Bakr. He had by now spent most of his wealth in Makkah in the service of Islam.

Having enjoyed the bliss and hospitality of the Cave of Thaur for four days and nights, the Prophet and Abu Bakr rode into the emptiness of the desert mounted on two sturdy camels furnished by a good-hearted Bedouin, Abdullah bin Arqat, who became their guide for the journey to Madina. For a whole week, the brave trio saw nothing but sand in the sun-baked desert. At night, a merciful moon lighted their path and the stars showed the way to the haven of their epic journey — Yathrib, which after the Prophet's arrival was to get

its famous name of Madina. The Prophet and his loyal followers prayed to God and their hearts were filled with the joy of the Heavens. The two tireless camels — ships of the desert — bore their charges faithfully, leaving tell-tale footprints in the sea of sand, but no one came in pursuit except a lone horseman who met the trio, learnt about God from the Prophet and embraced Islam; then he went his way.

The City of the Prophet: The Hijra Calendar

After a week's camel-ride through the desert, the Prophet and his devoted Companion, Abu Bakr, along with their guide, Arqat, entered Madina. The city was in a festive mood; the entire population turned out in their best clothes to welcome the Prophet to whose coming they had looked forward with joy and cheer in their hearts. At the head of the reception line were the wise men and women of the City who had invited him to Madina and the group of the Faithful who had preceded him in journeying to the "Queen of Cities" which was now to become the City of the Prophet — Madinat-un-Nabi. The Prophet entered Madina on the 22nd day of June in the year 622 of the Christian Era. The Prophet's emigration to Madina in the 13th year of the holy Quran's revelation to him made history. It marked the commencement of Islam's lunar Hijra calendar (its lunar year is usually 11 days less than the Christian Calendar's year).

A yell of joy and greetings went up from the huge gathering as the Prophet's loyal camel, Qaswa, buckled its knees and dismounted its holy rider. The tribal chiefs of Madina offered him their comfortable houses as his abode, but the statesman that he was, the Prophet let the innocent camel select the place where he would build a Mosque as a House of God and a little home for himself and his family. The site thus chosen for the Mosque was purchased from two orphans of the Najjar tribe in the city. Temporarily, he took up lodging in the nearby house of a relative, Abu Ayub-al-Ansari, and in a few days the Mosque's construction began.

Standing erect on the back of his faithful camel, the Prophet thanked the people of Madina for their rousing welcome and for inviting him to make their lovely city his home. He promised that Madina would be his permanent abode and he would do his best for their weal. He spoke to them about God and His Mercy and the Message of Islam. It was an inspiring speech, full of cheer and piety and a heart-warming vision of the future.

Just as the City State of Rome in Europe in the 5th Century B.C. was a centre of trade, Madina also enjoyed commercial importance in Arabia in the 7th Century A.D. It was a staging post for the trade caravans to Syria and Yemen. Its easy access to Najd and the eastern coastal region of al-Hasa, its delicious dates, its wells and springs of fresh water, its mild climate and the civilised ways of its inhabitants made it popular with the Arab camel trains which carried merchandise to the lands of West Asia. Madina also traded with Makkah, another important commercial centre, 290 miles to the south. Some 2046 feet above sea level, Madina was almost ringed by a number of hills which helped in its defence. The green vales between them had farmlands and orchards. When the Prophet built the Mosque in the first year of the Hijra, it covered an area of about 4,000 square feet; after the victory of the Muslims in the battle of the Khayabar in the Seventh Year of the Hijra, the Prophet had it extended to cover some 10,000 square feet. Since then, over the centuries, it has undergone vast expansion and acquired many architectural embellishments.

Balm of reconciliation

Reconciling Madina's two main tribes, the Aws and the Khazraj, whose old feuds had blighted its peace for the past many decades, and uniting the Emigrants from Makkah (the Mohajireen) and the local inhabitants (the Ansars or Helpers) in Islam's brotherhood were two of the major achievements of the Prophet in the first year of his abode in this City of Lights. He was immensely pleased when in an assembly of the Aws tribe, he succeeded in persuading its elders to

pledge protection to a leader of the Khazraj, Saad ibn Muaz. The Prophet's balm of reconciliation worked wonders. Another leader of the Khazraj tribe in Madina, Abdullah ibn Ubayy, who had the ambition of becoming the Chief of Madina before the Prophet's advent often plotted against God's Messenger and his Companions. His son, who was a devout Muslim and loyal to the Prophet, implored his father not to be a hypocrite and support the Prophet with sincerity. Abdullah ibn Ubayy jilted the Muslim Army in the Battle of Uhud because he was in cahoots with the Makkan attackers; he slandered the Prophet's wife, Ayesha. But the Prophet always treated him with respect and forgave him. When he died, the Prophet gave his own cloak to enshroud him for burial and led his funeral prayer.

A major plank of the Prophet's policy in building up the Islamic State was to win the confidence of the people of Madina and to maintain it by a statesman-like process of constant rapport. In view of the threats and attacks from the Makkan pagans, the Prophet quickly mobilised a defence force of brave volunteers who marched into battle at the briefest notice. He devised a strategy and a system for Madina's defence and periodically consulted its people about it. Some times, he himself led night patrols in Madina and its outskirts the moment dangers menaced the city's security. His success in beating back every attacker and the city's growing prosperity endeared him all the more to the people of Madina as God's Prophet and the head of their Islamic State.

The Prophet's Emigration to Madina — the Hijrah — freed Islam from the shackles of Makkan persecution and it enabled the Prophet to shape this City into the first fortress of Islam and the base of the world's first Islamic State — a Lighthouse of God from where the Divine Word spread to all parts of the Earth. The Prophet honoured his pledge that Madina -- the City of his adoption -- would be his permanent home. Ten years later when Makkah lay at his feet in surrender and submission and his relatives and friends of childhood

days implored him to make it his home again, the Prophet did not falter in his loyalty to Madina. He returned to it. Madina was the eternal abode of his father. The Prophet also made Madina his home while he lived, and, after his death, his last resting place. Both in the fullness of an exciting life and in the stillness of inevitable death, the Prophet honoured his Pledge of Aqaba to Madina.

Chapter 3

THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE HOUSE OF GOD : STATE'S SECRETARIAT

The Prophet's first major undertaking, after having led his band of devoted followers from Makkah to Madina, was to build Islam's first Mosque in the city of his adoption. The site he chose in Madina for constructing its first House of God was the spot where his loyal camel, **Qaswa**, dismounted him after the week-long journey from Makkah. The site was a modest-sized flat field bound by a cluster of tall palm trees which could be seen in the oasis even from a distance. The Prophet consulted his Companions about his choice of the site and they also liked it.

The next day, at dawn, after the Prophet and his followers had said their congregational prayers, they busied themselves in building the Mosque. They cleared the scrub, levelled the ground, made bricks and gathered stones and boulders for use in its construction. The design of the mosque was conceived by the Prophet himself. He consulted his followers but the grand design for the first House of God in Madina was the result of divine inspiration. The Prophet was well-acquainted with the architecture and design of the Christian Churches and the Jewish Synagogues, having travelled in the lands of the Middle East, but he wanted the Muslim Mosque—the **Masjid**—to symbolise the simpleness and nobility of the Islamic creed, projecting its Abrahamic and monotheistic origin.

In addition to being a place of worship, he wanted the Mosque to be the hub of the spiritual and temporal life of the Muslim community in Madina. Enshrined in the design of the Mosque was the concept that it should correspond to church, townhall, school and hostel, all under one roof. The Prophet's Mosque in Madina was

what architects call the open-plan mosque. Built over a rectangular area, it had sufficient open and covered space for the Muslim community to offer its congregational prayers. It had a niche but no dome or minarets. The walls were strong and the roof was thick and sturdy. It had a pulpit from where the Prophet delivered his sermon to the congregation of the Faithful.

Construction and cooperation

What was remarkable about the construction of this history-making Mosque in Madina was the fact that although the Prophet and his loyal followers had reached the haven of their journey after a strenuous camel-ride in the desert, they built it with inexhaustible energy and astonishing speed in true comradeship. The Prophet broke stones, baked bricks, made mortar, climbed ladders and plastered the walls and roof along with his devoted associates. The inhabitants of Madina volunteered to help the Prophet in building the Mosque and it was a pleasant, heart-warming sight to see dozens of children joyfully helping their elders in its construction.

The well-built Hamza carried huge stones and mounds of bricks on his shoulders and never showed a sign of exhaustion on his face. Abu Bakr, Omar, Ali and Bilal were amongst the Prophet's devoted followers who worked day and night to get the mosque completed in the shortest time. The mosque was, indeed, a collective undertaking and each and every member of the newly-arrived Muslim community in Madina and many of its original inhabitants made their contribution to its construction. Surprisingly, there was no mishap. It seemed that the Omnipresent Allah was Himself guiding the Prophet and his team of mosque-builders. Water from a nearby well was in plentiful supply. The fringe of palm trees provided a welcome shade to the builders and the smile on the Prophet's handsome face cheered them. They were inspired by the words of the Prophet that "work is, indeed, a kind of prayer" and that "God loves the hand of a workman". Their excellent teamwork in building the House of God made a great impression on the people of Madina.

Hymns to God

The food which the Prophet and his associates ate at mealtime was meagre but the act of eating together while at work made the meal enjoyable. The builders of the Mosque would often sing hymns to God in a chorus. But when the time for prayer came, the Prophet and his associates would leave work and join in a prayer to the Almighty. The families of the Muslims who had migrated from Makkah to Madina gave their help, support and encouragement to their men-folk in building the Mosque. The inhabitants of Madina marvelled at the spirit of dedication, solidarity and comradeship they saw in the Muslim emigrants from Makkah and their impeccable conduct. They were struck by the high-minded and noble leadership which the Prophet gave to the Muslim community and his utter selflessness. Word also got around in Madina of the humane virtues of Islam's great Prophet. If he noticed that the burden of bricks was back-breaking for the donkey, he would see to it that it was lightened. He disliked cruelty not only to human beings but to animals also.

A child's help

While the Mosque was being built, a little child, who was watching the laying of the bricks on the walls, ran to the Prophet and begged that he be allowed to lay a few bricks. The Prophet was touched by the child's gesture; he swept him into his arms and put a small brick into his tiny hands. "Put the brick on the wall", the Prophet told the excited toddler. After the child had done what he was told, the Prophet said to him: "Now you can say that you helped me in building this great Mosque". He then let the child scamper back to his mother with the exciting news that he helped the beloved Prophet in the construction of the Mosque. The Prophet raised no fund for its construction. The male members of the Muslim community donated their time and labour free of charge. They pooled their savings to pay for the construction material used in the building of the Mosque. The people of Madina were astonished at the spirit of self-reliance shown by the newcomers from Makkah and their upright conduct.

The call to pray

In a few weeks what was only a vision became a reality; the construction of the Mosque was completed. The hearts of the Muslims were filled with joy on the accomplishment of their first major collective undertaking in Madina. The Mosque was the embodiment of their religious aspirations as a distinct community; it was the focal point of their activity as a nascent society; it was the home of their spiritual and temporal leader; it was his court and secretariat; above all, it was the House of God wherein the Muslim community gathered daily to say their prayers and invoke divine blessings.

When the Mosque was completed, the Prophet and his followers discussed what mode of announcement should they follow to summon Muslims to the Mosque at prayer-time. Some suggested a bell; others thought of a drum or a horn. He discussed the matter in the assembly of his associates. It was Abdullah Bin Zaid who told the Prophet that he had a dream in which he saw that it was a human voice which called the Faithful to pray in the Mosque. The issue was decided; the Prophet saw the divine guidance. His eyes fell on Bilal, the Abyssinian slave whom Islam had made a free man and a trusted follower of the Prophet. The Prophet made Bilal Islam's first Muezzin. It was a signal honour for the young African. The Prophet demonstrated that in Islam, colour and race have no meaning and those who join the fold of Islam are brothers and sisters in their uniting faith in God and His Prophet.

Bilal the Muezzin

The Prophet instructed Bilal in the mode of call and the words he should utter when calling Muslims to pray in the Mosque. Watched by the concourse of expectant Muslims, Bilal clambered on to the roof of the Mosque and gave the prayer call beginning with the inspiring words: "God is great". His resonant words echoed all over the oasis and the word of God was heard in every house in Madina. "My Mosque is completed", said the Prophet of God to Bilal as he descended from the roof after uttering the prayer-call. So long

as he lived, it was Bilal's privilege to mount the roof of the mosque five times a day and summon Muslims to their prayer. A large tree trunk was shaped into a pulpit for the Prophet.

As the size of the Muslim community in Madina expanded and the Prophet founded the world's first Islamic state, the role of the Mosque assumed many dimensions. It became Islam's all-important foundational institution. The Muslim community in Madina loved and venerated the Prophet's Mosque. He and his family lived in apartments within its compound. The Muslims who came to pray in the Mosque every day also had the opportunity of meeting the Prophet; the rapport between him and the Muslim community was very close. He led them in the prayers and his Friday congregational sermons, in which he explained Islamic teachings and the Quranic Revelations, cemented their Faith in Islam.

The Secretariat

As Madina blossomed in its Statehood and the Islamic State expanded, the Prophet used the mosque as a House of God for His Worship, as a Secretariat of government, as a Council Hall, as a Court of Justice and as a venue for religious gatherings. Visiting delegations from other parts of Arabia and abroad met him in the Mosque. In its premises, he held grand assemblies of the Muslims of Madina to discuss spiritual and temporal matters, problems of administration, civic issues, social and economic subjects and the framing of a defence strategy when Madina was threatened by hostile forces. As the years passed, respect for the Prophet's Mosque became rooted in the hearts and souls of the Muslims of Madina.

On the occasion of Islam's important religious festivals, most of the Muslim community in Madina joined the social get-togethers in the Mosque. For marriages, the couples and their families flocked to the Mosque to have the marital vows blessed by the Prophet. As a propagator of education, the Prophet made use of the Mosque for educating the Muslim community, especially in the teachings of

Islam. A part of the Mosque premises was also used for the Baitul Maal, a State-managed Community Chest or Treasury from where help to the needy and poor was given.

According to the chronicles of the Early Period of Islam, a band of Abyssinians presented a rhythmic play with sticks in the courtyard of the Prophet's Mosque. The Prophet and Ayesha, his wife, were amongst those who saw the performance. The Muslim community respected the sanctity of the Mosque but it was not isolated from their social life. The Mosque was a living institution—an imperishable base of the Islamic Way of Life. The Light of Islam radiated from the House of God which the Prophet had built in Madina. As the years passed, more Mosques were built in Madina and the territories which came under its control and the Prophet's Mosque in Madina was a model for them.

LAW OF THE ISLAMIC STATE

The Shariah Law

As the Messenger of God, Prophet Muhammad transmitted to mankind God's Message, as is enshrined in the holy Quran, and implemented its commandments and injunctions in the individual and collective life of the Muslim Community, thus demonstrating their eminent practicability. For the Islamic State he established in Madina, the Quran was its Divine Constitution.

The belief of the Muslim that God is the Supreme Law-giver and Legislator is rooted in his affirmation of faith in the One and Only God as the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth and his act of submission to the Divine Will when he embraces Islam. It is also his belief that all sovereignty in the universe vests in God and He may delegate it to his Vicegerents on Earth. Prophet Muhammad not only conveyed God's Quranic Message to mankind but he was also an interpreter of its meaning for the guidance of the Muslims. Therefore, in Madina's Islamic State, the Quran was its Constitution, and the laws which flowed from it, along with their interpretation by the Prophet and his Sayings and Example, constituted the Shariah law of the State. This was the origin and source of Islam's constitutional, canonical, civil and criminal law.

In the centuries that saw the expansion of Islam and its emergence as a world-wide Empire, the body of Islamic Law was also expanded by Muslim rulers and Muslim jurists by using the three principal methods of (a) the Consensus of Learned Opinion (ijma) (b) argument by analogy (qiyas) and (c) intellectual effort to formulate an opinion (ijtihad). All the five schools of Islamic Law which evolved in the Eight and Ninth Centuries of the Christian Era—Hanafi, the Maliki, the Shafii, the Hambali and the Jaffaria—have as

their basic source the Divine and Eternal Law of the Quran. This was the sacred Law on which the Prophet founded the Islamic Order and in which was conceived the Islamic State. Because in Islam, Church and State are one, the law of the Shariah encompasses the individual Muslim, his family, the society of which he is a part and the State of which he is a citizen. (The Shariah in Arabic means "road" or "highway").

Judged by the canons of Western Political Science, the Islamic State under the Prophet was not a theocracy run by priests. Islam does not require a priesthood; a Muslim does not need an intermediary to establish communion with God; he prays to God directly. The Prophet, therefore, did not establish an order of priesthood, and the administrators he appointed in the Islamic State knew theology but they were not exclusively theologians. Some of them were Islam's soldiers during the day and Islam's preachers at night but none of them was a priest in the Western sense of the term. The Islamic Order established by the Prophet encompassed both the spiritual and temporal aspects of the Muslim Community's life.

Stable Society: Stable State

While enforcing the Law of God, based on the Quran, and in fostering in the Muslim Community the virtues of piety, honesty, righteous conduct and kindness to God's creation, the Prophet's main objective was a stable family, a stable society and a stable State. For a well-ordered society, which the Prophet was building up in Madina, the rule of law and the creation of an efficient administrative machinery and a governmental set-up were essential. This was an evolutionary process and the Prophet displayed remarkable statesmanship and a degree of flexibility, instead of utter rigidity, in developing the institutions and the structure of State without which the Islamic Order could not have been consolidated. When the Prophet was sending one of his learned Companions, Muadh ibn Jabal, on an official assignment in the Yemen, he instructed Muadh to use his own judgment, in the light of the Quran and the Shariah, in

deciding cases for which a direct reference or mandate in the Islamic Law Code was not readily available. Obviously, the Prophet was anticipating the future needs of an expanding realm of Islam having a much vaster population than what Madina then had.

Owing to the common Abrahamic origin of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, a certain similarity in some of their laws is understandable. A common strand is the canonical concept of reward for acts of piety and charity and punishment for crimes and sins. Islam "humanised" or softened the severity of punishment prescribed in the Mosaic Code for crime and sin. For example, a thief's hand should be severed but not if hunger drove him to commit theft to feed himself or his hungry family. Islam (as also the Mosaic Law) prescribes stoning for adultery, but only when the crime is proved by voluntary confession or the evidence of four reliable witnesses who have witnessed the sinful act; if they indulge in perjury they should be flogged. The penalty for murder in Islam (as in the Law of Moses) is death but the convict may not die if the relatives of the deceased accept compensation and agree to a reprieve for him.

Islam tempers the severity of legal punishment with the Quranic exhortation to Mercy and Clemency and the Prophet consistently practised it. The Prophet, in conformity with the teachings of the Quran, laid emphasis on societal cohesion and family harmony. The Muslim Society which the Prophet nurtured in Madina was a caring society in which every Muslim was expected to help his Muslim "brother" or "sister" in a fraternal spirit. The Islamic State, which the Prophet established in Madina and the territory under its control, was, in its deep concern for public weal, similar to what the 20th Century social reformers call the Welfare State. The thrust of the Islamic Law enforced under the Prophet was in harmony with the mandatory duties of social amelioration and social justice of the Islamic State.

Court of Justice

During the Prophet's lifetime in Madina, he dispensed justice and decided cases of a judicial nature himself; when he was away from Madina on military campaigns or the Haj pilgrimage, he nominated his Companions to handle such cases. For the Muslim Community, it was the Law of the Quran that was enforced. The Prophet addressed himself to cases or matters of a religious or devotional nature (*ibadat*), such as prayer, fasting, charity and the Haj pilgrimage, on the basis of Quranic injunctions and their interpretation. Cases relating to socio-religious matters, such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and oaths (*nuzur*), were also submitted to the Prophet for decision. Litigants in the disputes of a commercial nature relating to transactions (*maumalat*), such as sale and purchase, mortgage and lease, evidence, torts and contract, went to the Prophet's court in the Mosque and he gave his decision on the basis of evidence and the Quranic law. The Prophet also heard cases of crime (*Uqubat*), such as murder, theft, assault, fornication and perjury. In dispensing justice, the Prophet held an accused innocent until he was proved guilty on the basis of irrefutable evidence or his voluntary confession. Perjury in Islam is a serious offence and the Prophet made it known that to him in his court and in the eyes of God's law, it is an offence of the utmost gravity.

Many cases were peacefully settled in the Prophet's court by his exhortation that a Muslim should not fight with a brother Muslim. When a Muslim and a non-Muslim were the litigants, the Prophet treated them equally on the basis of equity and justice. The Prophet some times used his wisdom and commonsense in sifting the evidence produced before him and in getting to the truth of the matter. He encouraged reconciliation amongst the disputants, particularly in family disputes where a broken marriage would be a disaster for the children, putting a strain on the social fabric. Scribes recorded his judgements and these were communicated to the Muslim administrators and judges (*Kazis*) in the territories outside Madina for their guidance.

The Prophet emphatically asked the Muslim and other citizens of the state to enter into written, instead of verbal, contracts and pledges and to keep their record properly. When the Prophet helped a slave from Persia, Salman Farsi, to obtain his freedom from his Jewish owner near Madina, he advised Salman to have a written agreement with his master, containing the terms whose fulfilment would make him a freeman. The Prophet's agreements and accords with other religious or tribal groups or foreign governments were in written form. These were carefully preserved by his administration and many are available in Muslim historical records in Museums and State archives in some countries.

Legal System

The Islamic State's legal system under the Prophet was far more advanced than of any other state of the time. The principles of natural justice-- the rule against bias and the right to be heard-- were a part of his judicial practice. The holy Quran's injunction is: "Let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and to depart from justice. Be just, that is next to piety, and fear God, for God is well-acquainted with all that ye do" (S-5 A/9). As regards the right to be heard, the Prophet's command is: "When two persons bring a dispute to you for decision, do not deliver a judgement unless you have given an equal hearing to both of them".

The Prophet did not give ex parte decisions; he insisted on hearing both the sides. In the light of the Prophet's example, Caliph Umar gave the ruling: "According to Muslim Law, none can be imprisoned without doing full justice to him." An additional basis for this dictum emanated from the Quran's injunction: "God doth command you to render back your trusts to those to whom they are due; and when ye judge between man and man, that you judge with justice." (S-4 A/58). Another Quranic verse says: "Follow not the lusts of your heart lest you swerve and if you distort justice or decline to do justice, verily God is well-acquainted with all that you do" (S-4 A/135). The Quranic commandments and the Prophet's instructions

placed a heavy responsibility on the shoulders of those who were charged with the duty of dispensing justice in the Islamic State. They were made conscious of the fact that they were watched by the Divine Power in the performance of their judicial duties.

The Divine law of Islam, which the Prophet enforced in the Islamic State, gave full play to repentance (tawbah) in reforming an individual who had deviated from the social norms of good behaviour and sinned or committed a crime. The Quran ruled: "Whosoever repents after his crime and amends his conduct, Allah turns to him in forgiveness for Allah is Forgiving and most merciful" (S 5-A/42). Repentance implies a determined effort on the part of the repentor to return to the path of righteous conduct in order to please God and secure his pardon. The Prophet, one of whose goals was to reform society and to lead the Muslims towards pious conduct, encouraged sinners to repent and seek the Lord's forgiveness. This was one of the ways in which the Prophet tempered justice with mercy.

By ruling that the child is born in a state of innocence and that subsequently social environment makes him a Jew or a Christian or a Sabian, the Quranic law of Islam demonstrated its respect for the sanctity of human life and the wellbeing of the child. It was a part of Islam's war against the barbaric custom of infanticide amongst some Arab tribes in the pre-Islam days. Even if the child was born out of unholy wedlock, it was entitled to the care of its mother and society's protection because it was innocent, having committed no sin nor crime. When a mother with a suckling baby, on being stricken by her conscience, called on the Prophet in Madina and confessed herself that she had sinned in adultery and wanted to be punished and stoned to ease the torment of her soul, he insisted that she should feed and take care of her child at least for a few years before seeking the punishment due under the law. Islam does not recommend an ascetic or celibate life to its followers: it recognises man's biological needs and it urges Muslim men and women

to marry and beget children within the framework of God's law. The Prophet deemed it a pleasure to solemnise the marriages of Muslim couples and he prayed to God to bless them with a happy family life.

Justice to Women

The law of the Islamic State under the Prophet, in compliance with Quranic injunctions, gave Muslim women a share in the family inheritance (which was not the practice in pre-Islam Madina). A Muslim widow, whose husband, Saad ibn al-Rabi, was martyred in the battle of Uhud, went with her two orphaned daughters to the Prophet in the Mosque and complained that Saad's brother had taken over all the estate, giving no property to Saad's daughters who now needed help to get married. The Prophet summoned the daughter's uncle and, after having heard his version also, ordered him to give two-third of the estate to his nieces, an eighth to the widow and keep the rest for himself.

The Prophet's justice was even-handed. He awarded severe punishment to a Muslim who was convicted for assaulting a non-Muslim in Madina. To the Prophet, the gravity of the offence was greater because the Islamic State considered the non-Muslims its pledged responsibility (Zimmis). In his last Haj sermon, the Prophet repeated his call to the Muslims to protect the non-Muslim citizens and treat them well. When a quarrel between a Jew and a Muslim of Madina over the greatness of their respective Prophets was brought to the court of the Prophet, his ruling was that Moses was a God-sent Prophet and respect for him is obligatory for a Muslim.

Rule of Law

The quranic commandments and the **Shariah** law, which are the basis of the Law of Islam and the Islamic Order, have a built-in capacity for responding to contingencies and emergency situations. Islam is not static; it is dynamic. This was the spirit in which the Prophet built and shaped the Islamic State. The very nature of the Islamic Faith— its universal and global approach and belief in the

oneness of mankind— made it essential that the Law of Islam should cover every aspect of individual and collective life. It embraces religious rituals, personal character, morals, habits, family relationships, social and economic affairs, administration, rights and duties of citizens, the judicial system, laws of war and peace, inter-State relations, the relationship between man and his Creator and the use of the earth's resources.

While prescribing severe punishment for theft, Islam aims at creating a social order in which none is compelled by the force of circumstances to steal. The provisions in the Shariah law of Islam in respect of the theory of the State and the basis of its authority, the directive principles for the policy of the State, the qualifications and powers of the ruler, the distribution of authority amongst the Executive, legislative and judicial branches of the State, the nature of citizenship and the rights of Muslim and non-Muslim citizens constitute the Constitutional Law of Islam, and it had assumed form and shape in the Islamic State under the Prophet's direction.

The Prophet's administrative practices furnished the beginnings of Islam's Administrative Law whose evolution was accelerated under the rule of the four Caliphs who followed him. It has to be borne in mind that the Quran contains the eternal principles and the absolute truths while the Sayings, Example and Conduct of the Prophet (the **Sunnah**) contain the elaborate interpretations and the details of the principles and directions in the Quran, and the combination of the two becomes the **Shariah** Law of Islam. One of the finest tributes to the eminent virtue of Islam's Shariah Law was paid by the 18th Century British Parliamentarian and orator, Edmund Burke, when he said in the House of Lords in the course of the impeachment of Warren Hastings, a former British Governor-General of India, that "Muslim law and Jurisprudence were the loftiest in the world".

Galaxy of Jurists

Much before the Prophet neared the end of his earthly tenure, he had groomed Islam's future jurists and legal experts who were

destined to enrich its jurisprudence, the body of the Prophet's Sayings and Traditions (hadis) and the Islamic legal literature. Besides those who were to be the four Caliphs of Islam, Abu Bakr, Omar, Osman and Ali, there were many amongst the Prophet's Companions who had the benefit of his personal instruction in the law of Islam such as Abu Musa al-Ashari, Abdullah Ibn Umar, Urwah Ibn az-Zubair, Abdullah Ibn Abbas, Said ibn Al-Musayyab, Abu Hurayra, Amr ibn al-Aas, Abu Zar Ghaffari, Umm Atiyah, Musa ibn Talha and the Prophet's wife, Ayesha, who compiled 2210 Sayings of the Prophet. In a few years, Madina had an excellent school of jurisprudence whose luminaries included some of the best brains of Islamic law who had imbibed its knowledge from the Prophet himself.

Constitutional Law

In the Covenant of Madina, which the Prophet drew up and enforced, soon after taking up abode in Madina, to govern the relations between the Islamic State and its non-Muslim and Muslim citizens and the agreements he subsequently concluded with Christian, Jewish and polytheist tribes, giving them considerable autonomy in their internal affairs, a political scientist can see the beginnings of constitutional law in Islam. Its foundation was grounded in the absolute and eternal principles embodied in the Quran in respect of rulership and the rights of the governed. But it was organic in its pristine nature and it grew and developed first under the Prophet in Madina and then under the Caliphs when Madina expanded into an inter-continental empire. Its evolution was an on-going process without losing touch with its Quranic moorings.

In a study of constitutional law in Islam and its theory of State, it has to be remembered that the Islamic State was not a creator but a creation of the all-embracing Islamic Order whose establishment was the principal goal of the Prophet's assignment from God. The main purpose of the Islamic State was to facilitate the establishment, the consolidation and expansion of that Islamic Order and to give the

society under its umbrella both order and organisation. The wider Islamic social system, resulting from the Islamic Order, aimed at creating a righteous and just society based on the brotherhood of man, the elimination of human discrimination and exploitation, equality of opportunity and the most equitable sharing of wealth and resources. It was essentially a democratic society in which dissent was allowed within the parameters of God's Law and the citizens were given a sense of participation in the functions of the State through the consultative process between the Prophet and the people of Madina. It was not a regimented society, nor was it *laissez-faire*; it was an orderly society in which the freedom of the individual was fully respected but in its exercise he was expected not to endanger its wellbeing. As Islam's renowned scholars, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, and Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi, have lucidly pointed out in their Islamic writings, the Islamic State, founded by the Prophet, because of Islam's universal character, did not promote the narrow nationalism of the European nation-state but the concept of a globe-girdling fraternity of Islam under God.

Islamic International Law

In the Islamic State under the Prophet, the beginnings of Islamic International law were in evidence. The agreements he signed with the Makkan regime, particularly the Truce treaty of Hudaibya, his accord with the Christians of Najran, his treaties with a number of powerful tribes in the Yemen and in the northern parts of Arabia, Madina's relations with foreign countries, especially Abyssinia and the Byzantine Empire, and the commercial arrangements with foreign traders constitute the embryonic stage of Islamic International law or *Ilmus Sayyar* in Arabic. It was developed rapidly under the four Caliphs during whose tenure the Islamic Empire surpassed the geographical dimensions of the Roman Empire. During the Umayyad Caliphates, the development of Islamic International law was speeded up long before Hugo Grotius, the Dutch jurist, wrote his famous treatise on the law of war and peace, *de jure belli ac pacis*

in 1625. Many centuries before Grotius and the Geneva Conventions, Prophet Muhammad had prescribed and enforced a humane and civilised code of conduct for the soldiers of Islam in order to prevent savagery and brutality in war.

Under the Prophet, the evolving legal system of Islam had recognised that all States, irrespective of religion or race, have similar rights and obligations. This was exemplified in Madina's relations with Abyssinia. Based on the principles and directions inherited from the Prophet, the Islamic public law of nations, which was developed under the Caliphs and the Muslim rulers who followed in succeeding centuries, regulated the conduct of a Muslim state towards another Muslim State and also the relations between a Muslim State and a non-Muslim State. This was Islam's international law. In Europe, according to the renowned Muslim scholar and jurist, Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah, there was no international law before 1856. What passed as such was a mere public law of Christian nations. In that year, for the first time, a non-Christian nation, Turkey, was considered fit to benefit from the European public law of nations and this was the beginning of internationalising the public law of Christian nations of Europe.

Republican and Federal

Seen in the light of the present day Western Political Science and Constitutional law, the Islamic State under the Prophet was democratic, republican, federal and welfare-oriented, functioning within the framework of the Shariah Law of Islam. It was democratic because under its umbrella, all its citizens, irrespective of their faith, race and colour, enjoyed all the conceivable human rights and civil liberties; they had a say in the administration and they could question the highest in the State in regard to his conduct and actions. It was republican because there was no monarchy, no priesthood, no elite ruling class and no hereditary rule. It was federal because it gave considerable internal autonomy to the many tribes outside Madina which joined the Islamic State through written treaties or al-

liances. It was welfare-oriented because the main purpose of its policy and endeavours was to maximise the wellbeing of a righteous Community, providing social assistance through State-run institutions, such as the Charity Tax of **Zakat** and the Community Chest of the **Baitul Maal**, to the disadvantaged sections of society, such as the disabled, the indigent, the orphans and the widows. This was Islam's social security system.

The Prophet's constant endeavour in constructing the structure of the Islamic State in Madina was to harmonise it with the ongoing life of the community in which the virtues of piety, mutual help and godly behaviour were being rapidly infused. Therefore, the structure was not rigid but flexible and it showed an astonishing capacity to respond to the needs, demands and challenges posed by the dramatic expansion of the Islamic Realm within a few decades of the Prophet's demise.

Law of War and Peace

The law of the Quran prohibits the Islamic State from launching a war of aggression in these explicit words: "And fight in the way of God against those who fight against you but begin not hostilities. Surely God loves not aggressors" (S 2 V 191). It is only when the Islamic State is attacked and subjected to aggression that it should resort to arms to defend itself. But if in the course of hostilities the possibility of peace arises, the Quran commands the Muslims to pursue it and to take up the enemy's peace offer in order to end war: "If they incline towards peace, thou also incline towards it and put thy trust in God" (S 6 V 62). This is elaborated in another Quranic injunction in favour of peace: "So if they keep aloof from you and fight you not, and make you an offer of peace, God then allows you no way of aggression against them" (S 4 V 90). Disapproval of hostile action or belligerence without a cause towards the non-Muslims is expressed in this Quranic verse: "O ye who believe; when you go forth to fight in the cause of Allah, make proper investigation and say

not to any one who greets you with the greeting of peace: Thou art not a believer" (S 4 V 94).

The Quran recommends to the Muslims to have friendly relations with those non-Muslims who have done them no harm: "God forbids you not with regard to those who have not fought against you on account of your religion and who have not driven you out of your homes, that you be kind to them and deal justly with them. Surely God loves those who are just " (S 60 V 8). If a non-Muslim foreigner seeks asylum in the Islamic State, the Quran's command to the Muslims is : "If any one of the idolaters seeks protection of thee, grant him protection so that he may hear the Word of God; then convey him to his place of security. That is because they are people who have no knowledge" (S 9 V 6).

In the context of these clear-cut commandments of the holy Quran to the Muslims against committing aggression, the allegation purveyed by Islam's opponents that the Quran preaches "holy war" (Jihad) for the wanton killing of non-Muslims is baseless. The Quran says: "Whosoever killed a person—unless it be for killing another person or for creating disorder in the land—it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and whosoever saved a life, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind" (S 5 V 33). Self-defence is the natural right of every individual and if the Muslim community or the Islamic State is attacked, it must defend itself, but if there is an opening for a peaceful settlement it should not be missed. Centuries before some war-weary nations of Europe devised the Geneva Conventions in the 19th Century A.D. to curb brutality in wars, the Prophet of Islam prescribed in the third decade of the 7th Century A.D. this humane, civilised and merciful code of conduct for his soldiers: "In avenging the injuries inflicted upon us, molest not the inmates of the shrines and monasteries, spare women and children, touch not the suckling infant and the patients in bed. Do not destroy the dwellings of the unresisting inhabitants and their means of subsistence and touch not the fruit trees and the palm".

The Prophet prohibited the mutilation of the dead bodies of the enemy which was a common practice in wars at that time. In the battle of Uhud, the Prophet was shocked and grieved by the mutilation of the bodies of the Muslim defenders of Madina by Makkah's pagan soldiers but he instructed the Muslims not to mutilate the enemy's dead in retaliation. The Prophet said to his soldiers: "Fight and do not exceed the limits and be not unfaithful and do not mutilate bodies and do not kill children".

The holy Quran ruled that "when Muslims overcome the enemy, they have to make them prisoners-of-war and afterwards either set them free as a favour or let them ransom themselves until the war terminates" (S 47 V 4). This means that the Quran does not permit the massacre of the vanquished enemy. It calls for the release of the prisoners-of-war when hostilities have ceased and peace is established. The Prophet prescribed this humane treatment for the prisoners-of-war in the Islamic State: "they are your brothers. God has put them in your hands, so whosoever has his brother in his hands, let him give him (the war prisoner) to eat whereof he himself eats and let him be given to wear what he himself wears; and do not impose upon them a work they are not able to do, and if you give them such a work, then help in the execution of it".

The Prophet of Islam, during his decade-long rulership of Madina, fought some thirty battles and skirmishes in the defence of the Islamic Faith and the Islamic State. These were defensive battles and in not one of them did the Prophet's sword shed human blood. As a tribal scion, he had learnt swordmanship, archery and the arts of battle during his youthful years in Makkah. But he was essentially a man of peace, and, as God's Messenger, peace and mercy unto mankind were the pillars of his Prophetic Mission. He had to defend Islam when it was under attack but he used persuasion and gracious preaching for spreading Islam in the world.

THE QURAN THE ETERNAL CONSTITUTION

It is the faith of every Muslim that the Holy Quran is the Word of God revealed to mankind through Prophet Muhammad. The revelation of the Quran to him began when the Angel Gabriel visited him in the Cave of Hira near Makkah in A.D. 610, told him that he was chosen to be God's Prophet and asked him to recite the Quranic verse: "Read in the name of Thy Lord and the Cherisher..." The Prophet was then in the fortieth year of his life. The revelation of the Quran to the Prophet through the Angel Gabriel was continued in Makkah for thirteen years, and when he migrated to Madina in A.D. 622 more chapters of the Quran were revealed to him. It took 23 years for the whole of the Quran to be revealed to Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet remembered and recited the Quranic verses before his companions who memorised them. At the time of the Prophet's last Haj pilgrimage at the Kaaba in A.D. 632, the Divine message to him was that the process of the revelation of the holy Quran was completed. He thus had the premonition that his date with his Maker was not far. The Prophet died in June of that year.

The Prophet trained Muslim scholars who memorised the Quranic revelations to him and the scribes who wrote the Quranic verses on parchment, palm leaves and large bones. One of the most talented and trustworthy scribes was Zayd bin Thabit, an expert calligrapher in the Arabic language, who enjoyed the confidence of the Prophet. The proper arrangement of the Quranic verses in written form was done during the Prophet's lifetime. After his demise, during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, a number of Muslim scholars, who had memorised the Quran as revealed to the Prophet,

were martyred in a battle. The Caliph then ordered the collection of the written portions of the Quran and gave Zayd bin Thabit the task of compiling them in book form because he had learnt the Quran by heart under the Prophet's direction. With extraordinary care and after the most intensive checking and cross-checking from the living Companions of the Prophet, Thabit presented the compilation of the Quranic verses in book form to Caliph Abu Bakr. This book remained in the safe custody of the Caliph but copies were made for those desirous of having the Quranic text for their guidance. His successor, Caliph Omar, carefully preserved the original master copy.

During the Caliphate of Osman, the need for a large number of error-free copies of the Quran was felt in Islam's expanding dominions beyond the shores of Arabia. Caliph Osman utilised the services of Zaid Bin Thabit and Abdullah bin Zubair, another expert calligrapher, to make six identical copies of the Quran in Arabic. They were assisted in this important task by a number of the Prophet's surviving Companions who had memorised the Quranic revelations to him during his lifetime.

Copies of the Quran

While the master copy was kept in the custody of Caliph Osman, two copies of the Holy Quran were sent by him to the authorities in the cities of Makkah and Madina for official use and guidance and the other copies were sent to the governors of the Islamic dominions. This is the authorised edition of the Holy Quran which, through succeeding centuries, gained world-wide circulation and is read by the Muslims. The Arabic text has been translated into many scores of languages. Muslims bear a debt of abiding gratitude to Caliph Osman for the unique service he rendered to the Quran by getting the authorised edition compiled and duplicated in book form for world-wide distribution, including the cities of Damascus, Kufa and Basrah which were a part of the expanding Empire of Islam. Caliph Osman was honoured with the title of **Jami-al-Quran** or Com-

piler of the Quran. Credit must also go to Hafsa, the daughter of Caliph Omar and a wife of the Prophet of Islam, for preserving the first compilation of the Quran done during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr. Well-versed in reading and writing, Hafsa extended cooperation to Zayd bin Thabit and his Makkan and Madinite colleagues, particularly Hudhayfah Ibn Yaman, in the task given to them for producing a standard version of the Quran, incorporating all the divine revelations to the Prophet in Makkah and Madina. This is the standard version in Arabic, free from interpolations, which has been read and recited by Muslims during the past fourteen centuries.

The Quran consists of 114 **Surahs** or Chapters which contain 6,353 verses or **Ayat** and a total of 77,934 words. Of these ninety chapters were revealed to the Prophet over a period of 13 years in Makkah and the remaining chapters were revealed to him during the 10 years of his life in Madina. The literary style of the Arabic text of the Quran exercised tremendous influence on the development of the Arabic language and the art of Islamic calligraphy. Tens of thousands of devout Muslims have memorised the whole of the Quran. Some are professional reciters of the Quran who have mastered the rules of its recital, especially the correct pronunciation of its letters and intonations. The mode of the Quranic recital by the **Qari** or reciter is based on the practice followed by the Prophet.

While the Quran deals with every aspect of human existence on earth, its keynote message relates to the concept of God (or Allah in Islam) as the Creator and Nourisher of the worlds, the Most Merciful, the Most Beneficent and the Lord of the Day of Judgement. God's attributes of Mercy and Compassion are mentioned at more than 300 places in the Quran. Obviously, it is meant to persuade men and women to practise the noble quality of mercy. The Prophet said: "One who shows no mercy to his fellowmen, no mercy shall be shown to him." God's attribute as the Master of the Day of Judgement is to remind human beings of their accountability for their actions to God in the Hereafter.

Translating the Quran

Even during the lifetime of the Prophet, it appears that the Muslim missionaries and scholars, who were deputed to carry the Word of God to distant lands, translated into local languages the Arabic text of the holy Quran in order to make the indigenous people, who did not know Arabic, understand the Quranic teachings. The allegation made by some critics of Islam that the translation of the Arabic text of the Quran into other languages was banned is untrue. Utmost care was obviously exercised in rendering it into other languages so that errors and interpolations did not creep into the translation in local languages and the Arabic text was used in the formal prayers by the Muslims. In the translations, the Arabic text always figures with the translation in the local language.

Similarly, all through the many centuries of Islam, copies of the holy Quran in Arabic were duplicated by the hundreds — often under official auspices—for being kept in the Mosques, Islamic seats of learning, the offices of the Caliph and his Governors in the Islamic realm and other departments to which the public had access. Individuals also obtained copies of the Holy Quran for their use and their libraries. The art of calligraphy in the Islamic World progressed by leaps and bounds owing to the surge in the demand for copies of the Quran. After the printing press was invented in Europe and introduced in the Islamic World, the printing of the Quran was also undertaken.

Despite the passage of fourteen centuries, the style of recital of Quranic verses by the Reciter (the **Qari**), who memorises in Arabic every word of the Quran, is very similar to the style followed by the Prophet of Islam in the Prophet's Mosque in Madina and copied by his Companions and those scholars, especially the People of the Bench (**Ahl-as-Safa**), who memorised the holy Book and recited it in public. The correct pronunciation of every letter, intonation, the measured chanting, the cadence in the graceful delivery, the sublimity of thought and divine reflection are some of the features which

make the traditional stylish recital of the Quran one of its most endearing rituals for Muslims. About God, Who is the most dominant theme in the Quran, the holy Book says:

"God – there is no god but He, the Living, the Ever-existing One. Neither slumber nor sleep overtaketh Him. His is What the Heaven and Earth contain.." (The Quran: 2: 255) "God is the Light of Heaven and Earth.." (The Quran: 23:35)

"The birds in their flight, of each verily He knoweth the worship and the praise...the fishes of the sea and the beasts of the earth, the lightning's flash and the storm of hail and the procession of the rain-bearing clouds are the manifestations of His Power and His Benevolence.." (The Quran: 24:41)

Caliph Osman's Services

Evidence gathered by a number of Muslim scholars shows beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Arabic text of the Quran, as it exists today, is in no way different from the Quranic Revelations which were rendered into writing during the lifetime of the Prophet by competent scribes under his personal supervision. The Prophet, it appears, even gave directions about the placing of the alphabet dots and diacritical marks on the Quranic text in the Makkan Arabic script. Obviously, he wanted to ensure that the text of the Quran, which he was to give to the Muslims of his time and to posterity, should be error-free – the true Word of God as conveyed to him by the Angel Gabriel in Makkah and Madina. This was the Quranic text on which Caliphs Abu Bakr and Omar relied for guidance. It needed no redaction. Caliph Osman's historic achievement was that he and the members of the Quranic Commission he set up scrutinised every word of the Quranic text and put marks of punctuation in order to facilitate its proper recitation in public. He had many copies of the Quran made and sent to the regional administrative heads in the intercontinental realm of Islam. Along with every copy of the handwritten Quran went guidelines from Caliph Osman in regard to the

correct pronunciation of the Arabic text and the phonetic cadence. This was particularly helpful to non-Arab Muslim scholars and memorisers of the Quran in imparting phonetic grace and grandeur to the Quranic holy words they recited in public.

As the Message of the Quran was for the benefit of humanity, the Prophet had given his approval for the verses of the Quran to be translated into other languages. During the Prophet's lifetime, it seems that the first chapter of the Quran was rendered into Persian and the Persian translation was sent to Iran for the benefit of the Persians. In Abyssinia also, the Muslim emigrants translated the Quranic verses into the local language so that the Abyssinians could understand them. The Prophet took a keen interest in the training of those Muslims who memorised the Quran and recited it in public. Their training ground was the Prophet's Mosque. Many of them became, in a year or two, Islam's missionaries and carried the message of the Quran to the tribes and peoples outside the city of Madina. Some of the ladies in the households of the Prophet and his Companions had also memorised many Quranic verses which helped in the Islamic education of their children. The Prophet's emissaries, who carried his invitation to the rulers of a number of countries to join the fold of Islam, had memorised the Quran, and in some foreign courts they were called upon to recite the Quranic verses and convey their meaning in the local language. In his last Haj sermon, the Prophet told the Muslim community that they should cling to the Quran for their very survival.

EDUCATION IN THE ISLAMIC STATE

As education is one of the cornerstones of Islam, the divinely-ordained Prophetic Mission of Prophet Muhammad was to educate mankind in the Ways of God, in the graces of civilised, righteous conduct and in the commandments of the Holy Quran and to eliminate ignorance and sin. He prescribed the acquisition of knowledge, even if it necessitated going to the farthest corners of the globe, as a duty for every Muslim. He was himself, indeed, a teacher who taught men, women and children the Message of God as revealed to him by the Angel Gabriel in the Cave of Hira near Makkah and he had all the Divine Revelations assembled in his lifetime to give the Islamic polity the God-sent Eternal Textbook--the glorious Quran.

The Prophet's educational system aimed at developing every faculty with which God has endowed human beings so as to enrich and ennoble man's body, mind and soul. The conceptual base of his educational system was global, not parochial, because his Divine Mission, as God's Messenger, was for the benefit of the entire human race. Therefore, education in Islam, as initiated by the Prophet, covers every aspect of human activity and embraces the Humanities as well as the Sciences. Its base is religion because without knowing the Word of God, good character-building is not possible, and God is the most dominant theme in the Eternal Quran.

The Prophet's Education

Although the Prophet did not have the benefit of a formal education in his chequered childhood, having lost his father, his mother and his caring grandfather in the early years of his life, it was the Will of God that he should be educated in the all-embracing knowledge

of Islam through the Angel Gabriel who conveyed to him the Quranic Revelations. It is most significant that God's Commandment to the Prophet in the first Quranic Revelation to him in the Cave of Hira was to read and write and to proclaim God's Message. The Prophet was thus commanded by God: "Read in the name of Thy Lord who created man from an embryo: Read for Thy Lord is the Most Beneficent Who taught, by the pen, knowledge to man which he did not know" (96:5)

Learning and teaching is a Quranic injunction which the Prophet practised all through the years of his Prophetic Mission. He exhorted Muslims to seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave: "Go in quest of knowledge even unto China", meaning distant lands. Said the Prophet: "Whosoever takes to the path of learning, I shall make the way to the Heavens easy for him". The discipline of Islam — obedience to the Will of God and implementing the Quranic commandments — was an essential element in the Prophet's educational system. This is what enabled the Muslim to distinguish Truth from Falsehood, Right from Wrong and Good from Bad. This process of spiritual purification and enlightenment was necessary for the harmonious development of the human personality and for the imbibing of worldly knowledge by a human being to benefit himself and the polity to which he belongs.

The Prophet's concept of Islamic education was broad and all-embracing. He wanted his Muslim follower to equip himself with the gifts of knowledge and learning in order to earn a livelihood, to do his duty to God as well as to his fellow human beings and to seek his lawful share in God's bounty on earth. One of the purposes of the Prophet's educational system was to reform the individual, to brighten his innate qualities of head and heart which are God's gift to man, to control his animal passions, greed and lust and to be useful not only to himself but to his family and to the society of which he is a part. The Prophet uttered words of glowing praise for the learned man who carries into practice his learning and teaches it

to others for their benefit. The Prophet said: "The knowledge from which no benefit is derived is like a treasure from which no charity is given in the service of God." Another saying of the Prophet, which exhorts the pious, learned man to share his learning with others and to document it in books, reads: "... Every book compiled by a learned man which helps in the moral advancement of mankind brings him an unceasing reward." The Holy Quran instructs a Muslim to pray to God to increase the wealth of his knowledge: "O my Lord, Advance me in knowledge."

Teaching Children

The importance which the Prophet attached to the education of the Muslim masses can be gauged from the fact that he asked some literate Makkan pagans who were taken prisoner in the Battle of Badr, a year after his emigration to Madina and the establishment of the Islamic State there, to teach reading and writing to the children of the city in order to win their freedom without paying any ransom. In this we see the beginning of the system of primary education for the children of Madina through the elementary school or the **Madressah** under the Prophet's direction. When he led the Muslim community in congregational prayers in the Mosque in Madina, the Quranic verses he recited and his lucid exposition of their meaning and thrust were a part of the continual process of the education of the Muslim community.

The Prophet and his Companions showed the Light of Learning to the non-Muslims also in order to acquaint them with the Message of God and the noble teachings of Islam. A teacher par excellence, the Prophet trained those whose duty it was to teach others the Word of God, to memorise the Quran, to write the Quranic Revelations to him and to spread learning in the expanding realm of Islam. The institution of the **People of the Bench, (ahl-as-Safa)**, who were the devotees of Islam and lived in the precincts of the Prophet's Mosque in Madina and were fed by the Prophet and his family, was meant to train Islamic teachers and missionaries to carry the message of Islam to communities far and near.

By welcoming Madina's children to the Mosque and encouraging them to listen to his sermons, the Prophet impressed upon their parents the importance he assigned to their proper upbringing and to their education. At times, Muslim children in groups visited the Prophet's Mosque and he blessed them with affection and words of wisdom from the holy Quran. As the Islamic State grew in stature and its realm expanded under the Prophet's direction, he instructed the administrators and the missionaries to promote literacy and learning amongst adults as well as children. The many mosques which were built in Madina and its neighbourhood during the lifetime of the Prophet to cater to the religious needs of the expanding Muslim community had teaching sessions after the prayers in the style of what in course of time became full-fledged **Madressahs** or schools of Islamic education.

The Prophet encouraged the art of writing as a part of his educational system and there is chronicled evidence to show that the Islamic State in Madina in a few years possessed more than forty trained calligraphers in Arabic. Some of them also wrote in other languages spoken in neighbouring countries. The Prophet was particularly pleased when a man or woman of learning and knowledge joined the fold of Islam and he put their talent to the use of the community and the Islamic State. He gave them honour and respect because of their learning and their willingness to impart it to others, and many were inducted into the Circle of his devoted and trusted Companions.

When prisoners-of-war were produced before the Prophet, he was always on the lookout for men of learning and practical knowledge and experience in vocations so that their services could be utilised for the benefit of the community. He gave encouragement and respect to a Christian doctor who practised medicine and ran a dispensary near Makkah and passed on his medical knowledge to interested Makkans. The Prophet also encouraged vocational training in view of the swelling demand for trained artisans in Madina and the areas which came under Muslim control.

The Prophet's encouragement to learning and to the acquisition of knowledge produced vast dividends for the Islamic State even during his lifetime. Scholars, jurists, philosophers, administrators, diplomats, skilled artisans and practitioners of medicine were amongst the assets of the Prophet's Islamic State. Educational institutions and libraries were taking shape, and teachers and missionaries from Madina were being sent by the Prophet to spread the Word of God and knowledge in the territories which came under Islam's sway or had friendly relations with the Islamic State. Some went as far away as China, and the 7th Century A.D. tomb of a Prophet's Companion in the city of Canton, where he preached Islam, testifies to the missionary zeal which the Prophet had inculcated in the teachers he had trained in Madina.

Centres of Islamic Learning

The consolidation of the Islamic State in Madina and the extension of its authority and influence to neighbouring lands, such as Yemen, Bahrein, Najd, Najran and areas bordering on Syria, necessitated the establishment of more centres of Islamic learning by the Prophet. The expanding Islamic State needed more trained personnel for its administration, for the running of the Mosques and the preaching of Islam, for the collection and utilisation of State revenues (such as **Zakat**, the Charity Tax from Muslims and the **Jizya** tax from non-Muslims), for the upkeep and cultivation of State lands, for the maintenance of State records and the issuance of Government orders and edicts, for regulating the practices of trade and commerce and for conducting relations with foreign countries.

With astonishing speed, the Prophet responded to the demand for more State personnel and had the cadres trained under his personal supervision. Notable amongst them were Khalid bin Saeed who worked for Madina's Islamic State in Sanaa in Yemen, Abu Musa Ashaari who preached Islam in Aden, Moghair bin Shoba who taught Islam in Najran, Khalid bin Walid who carried Islam's mes-

sage to the tribes around Makkah, Ula bin Hazrami who served the Islamic cause in Bahrein, Mohajir bin Abu Ummayah who distinguished himself in the service of Islam in Yemen, Adi bin Hatim, the chieftain of the Tayy tribe who, after embracing Islam, preached it to his tribe and Ali bin Abu Talib whose preaching induced the important Hamdan tribe in Yemen to join the fold of Islam. They had supportive personnel who had learnt the Quran and had received some measure of education in Madina. Amr bin Al-Aas, who embraced Islam after the Prophet's conquest of Makkah, learnt the teachings of Islam so rapidly that the Prophet sent him on political-cum-missionary assignments to Oman and areas bordering on Syria and his achievements in the service of the Islamic State were commendable.

Along with learning and education, the Islamic State's personnel were well-versed in the martial arts of the day and the science of warfare. The education and training of those who dispensed justice received the Prophet's personal attention. The Prophet kept a watchful eye on the conduct of the State's personnel, especially those involved in public dealings, and reprimanded or punished any one who defaulted or misused public funds. An official who claimed a part of the **Zakat** collection as his own share was ordered by the Prophet to surrender it to the State Treasury. The principle of accountability was an essential ingredient in the Prophet's scheme of administration. That is why the Prophet's educational system laid great emphasis on character-building, the fostering of piety and righteous conduct, the strengthening of the moral fabric of the individual, the curbing of his animal instincts, and inculcating in him an insatiable quest of knowledge and wisdom.

Education Of Women

The Prophet encouraged the education of Muslim women in keeping with his instruction: "Acquisition of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim, male and female." In his own household, the Prophet took a deep interest in the education of his children and his

grand-children and his wives. A group of Muslim women, keen to learn the Quran and its interpretation, requested the Prophet to set apart a day for them for their instruction and education and he agreed to do so regularly. A female member of the Prophet's circle of Companions, Umm Atiyyah, reported that soon after his arrival in Madina, the Prophet sent Omar to lecture to a group of Muslim women of Madina (Ansars) on Islam and its teachings. The Prophet addressed Muslim women when they visited the Mosque for prayers and to listen to his words of wisdom and piety. He made it obligatory for Muslim parents to teach their children, male and female, the Quran and the words of prayer to God. He laid stress on educating girls because in time to come they would be the mothers of the new generation of Muslims. When a group of Muslim young men had benefited from the Prophet's instruction he asked them to impart what they had learnt to the female members of their families also. He specially advised husbands to teach the Quranic verses to their wives. When a Muslim young man sadly told the Prophet that he did not have any dower to give to his wife, he solemnised his marriage on the condition that the bridegroom will teach his wife the Quranic Chapters he had memorised in the Prophet's Mosque.

During the Prophet's lifetime, many Muslim women distinguished themselves in the humanities and the sciences. His wife, Ayesha, memorised most of the Quran and was very learned. She survived the Prophet by fifty years during which she was consulted by the Caliphs because of her compilation of his Sayings, her vast knowledge of Islamic law (fiqa) and her command over the Arabic language. Scores of Muslim scholars benefited from her knowledge. One of her pupils, Urwah ibn az-Zubair, ranked her amongst the great scholars of the Quran and the Sayings of the Prophet, Islamic duties, literature and Arab history. She had also compiled a list of herbs with medicinal qualities. Another wife of the Prophet, Safiyah was learned in jurisprudence; so was Umm Salmah. Amongst the Muslim women who distinguished themselves in Islamic Law and

practice and many other fields of knowledge were Umm Atiyah, Rabia bint Muawad, Aisha bint Saad abi Waqas, Umrah bint Abdur Rahman, Umm ad-Darda, Fatma bint Qays, Umm Salim (mother of Anas) and Zaynab, the daughter of Umm Salmah. One of the most eminent amongst the educated Muslim ladies of Madina was Fatima, the Prophet's daughter and Ali's wife, who imparted knowledge to Muslim women and taught them the Ways of Islam.

CHAPTER 7

THE CULTURE OF KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

The tremendous importance which Islam attaches to the acquisition of knowledge is borne out by this eloquent exhortation of the Prophet: "Acquire knowledge. It enables the possessor to distinguish right from wrong; it lights the way to the Heaven. It is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when friendless; it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is an ornament amongst friends and an armour against enemies."

Respect for learning and the learned ones is mirrored in many Sayings of the Prophet: "Whosoever comes to my place of prayer, let him come for good works; either to learn or to teach them.... Learn to know yourself. He who honours the learned honours me. The learned ones are the heirs of the Prophets-- they leave knowledge as their inheritance; he who inherits it inherits a great fortune...He who leaves his home in search of knowledge, to him God shows the way to Paradise...Knowledge is the life of Islam and the Pillar of Belief....Learn, teach and widen your knowledge and do not die ignorant. God does not excuse ignorance...Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave. The seeker of knowledge will be greeted in the Heaven with a welcome from the angels."

The Quranic commandments and the Sayings of the Prophet exhort Muslims to study all the branches of knowledge, including science. The Quran, in a number of verses, refers to the natural phenomenon — the sun, the moon and the other stars in the skies,

the wind, the clouds, the rains, the birds in flight, the change of seasons, the greening of trees in spring, the parched earth and the magic rainfall does to it, and the storms which rage in the sea — and it describes them as Signs from God which mankind should observe and contemplate. The Quran encouraged the direct empirical observation of natural phenomenon in order to acquire more knowledge of it. In the 7th Century A.D., when it was not commonly known that the moon reflected the sun's light, the Quran said: "Consider the sun and its forenoon brightness (53:7) and "the moon when she borrows light from it" (91:1-2).

Scientific Inquiry

In keeping with the Quranic injunctions, the Prophet encouraged scientific inquiry by the scholars of his time in Madina. It was the result of this encouragement that within a few decades, Muslims began enriching science and medicine with their invaluable researches, discoveries and inventions. A study of the **Surah ar-Rahman** of the holy Quran (LV), which contains references to sixteen kinds of natural phenomenon as the Signs of God for man to ponder over, shows that it induced Muslim scientists to adopt the Empirical Inductive Method in scientific research from the closing years of the Seventh Century A.D. In a few decades Muslim science and medicine were so advanced that by the middle of the 8th Century A.D. a brilliant Muslim scientist, Ibrahim al-Fazari al-Jandab, had produced an improved astrolabe which could measure angles correctly and an armillary sphere with which the movements of the celestial bodies could be understood properly. About the same time, another extraordinary Muslim Arab scientist, Jabir ibne Haiyyan, was writing a masterpiece on chemistry, laying down the ten classical rules for performing experiments which are as valid today as they were in the dawn of the age of Science in the World of Islam. The flowering of the Islamic civilization, soon after Islam surged across the frontiers of Arabia, resulted from the Prophet's splendid spadework in the Islamic State.

The groundwork for it was laid during the Prophet's lifetime in the Islamic State in Madina and it was the Quran whose careful study induced the Muslim scientists of the Seventh and Eighth Centuries A.D. to adopt and develop the empirical inductive method in scientific inquiry. Its knowledge travelled from Sicily and Spain during the heyday of Muslim rule to Western Europe where Francis Bacon was one of the European scientists who tapped it gainfully during the 16th Century A.D. In the process of scientific inquiry, the Arab scientists undoubtedly made good use of Greek, Indian, Chinese and Roman scientific works whose Arabic translations were speedily made available to the many seats of learning and research which sprouted all over the Empire of Islam. Access to foreign sources of knowledge was encouraged by the Prophet himself when he told Muslims to acquire knowledge, even if it meant going to such a far away country as China.

Military Science

In the field of military science, the Prophet studied for the benefit of the Army of Islam the organisational structure, the training methods and the advanced equipment used by the more experienced armed forces of the time such as the Byzantine and the Persian legions. In the last years of the Prophet's life, the strength of the Islamic State's Army had increased to 30,000 men and giving it a proper organisational structure was a task to which the Prophet addressed himself with speed and ingenuity, producing spectacular results. Although the Islamic State's military strength under the Prophet was land-based, attention was being paid by his administration to sea-faring and boat-building after the Muslim conquest of Makkah from where access to the coast and the Red Sea was easy. Arab trading vessels even at that time plied between the Red Sea ports of Arabia and Abyssinia and many Arab boats carried merchandise between Arabia and the countries of the Indian Ocean—as remote as Java, the Philippines and China. Sixty years after the Prophet's demise, the expanding Empire of Islam was to acquire a

navy many of whose men-of-war were built in the shipyard in Alexandria in Muslim-ruled Egypt. The decks were cleared during the Prophet's rule for Arab navigation and Arab astronomy to make their mark in the sealanes of the world.

Navigation, Astronomy

In developing their knowledge of navigation, astronomy and sea-faring, Muslim scientists in Arabia, who started flourishing from the days of the Prophet's rule, drew inspiration from the Quran's instruction: "He (God) it is who hath appointed for you the stars that ye guide yourselves thereby in the darkness on land and sea ; we have made the signs distinct for a people who have knowledge" Arab sailors rapidly gained skills at using the stars for navigation; the Arabs pioneered in developing the stern rudder which made a ship more manoeuvrable. The lateen sail, developed by Arab navigation in the Middle Ages, was exceptionally useful for sailing into the wind. It became so popular in the Mediterranean's navigation that the Portuguese empire-builders used it for their shipping when they forayed into the vastness of the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic, drawing heavily on the enormous experience of Arab navigators who had explored the world's seas and oceans much before the maritime ventures of the Iberian nations.

During the first century of Islam, Arab scholars had begun fashioning their theories in every branch of science through a keen observation of the natural phenomenon and experiments. Some of them were engaged in studying and offering critiques of the scientific works of the ancient Greek masters and some even corrected Ptolmey's classic, **Geography**, by pointing out that the Indian Ocean was not a closed sea but it flowed into the Atlantic. The groundwork for the naval power of the Islamic State was being laid during the Prophet's rule. Had this not been so, the Arab fleet would not have been able to inflict a crushing defeat on the Byzantine naval flotilla of some 500 vessels at Dhat al-Sawari in A.D. 655, barely 23 years after

his death. The exploits of Muslim Arab navigators and geographers in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean in the early centuries of Islam, followed by the Ottoman Turks, are remarkable epochs in the naval history of mankind. Geography remains permanently indebted to a great Muslim scientist and explorer, Al Biruni (973-1050) who, during his teenage years, invented a vastly improved device for determining latitude. For centuries, the Arab navigator, Ibne Majid's Nautical directory (1409) remained the bible of nautical science for those who sailed in the Red Sea and the vast Indian Ocean, enabling the Portuguese under Vasco da Gama to build their empire in Asia and Africa in the 15th Century A.D. The gifts of Islam between the 7th and 17th Centuries A.D. to the arts and sciences of the world and to human civilisation belie the fib that Islam inhibits material progress and scientific inquiry.

The Islamic institution of the annual Haj pilgrimage at the Kaaba in Makkah, to which the Prophet attached immense importance during his lifetime, gave a boost to Arab seafaring and the boat-building industry in the expanding empire of Islam. As travel on land and sea increased, Arab knowledge of geography, cartography, commerce, sociology and anthropology expanded by leaps and bounds.

Chemistry and Research

The boom in the construction industry--more mosques, more roads and bridges, more public and private housing -- gave an impetus to the knowledge of architecture, engineering, arithmetic, algebra, trigonometry and geometry and the basic sciences of the time. Gains were rapidly made in astronomy, meteorology, medicine and zoology. The process of carefully observing natural and physical phenomenon, as commanded by the Quran, led to large-scale experiments by Muslim scientists, enabling them to improve upon Greek science whose deficiency was largely due to inadequate experimentation. An Arab scientist, Ibn al-Haithan, early in the Middle

Ages, studied the course of the rays of light reflected by different types of mirrors and with different angles of incidence and produced a brilliant theory on the laws of reflection. The world of chemistry --al-kimia or the science of chemicals in Arabic-- was revolutionized by Arab science in the first flush of Islamic progress and development and the basis for it was laid by the Quran and the Prophet through their exhortation to observe and experiment.

As the Prophet fought battles to defend Islam and the Islamic State from the predatory pagan tribes, in little laboratories and workshops in Madina Muslim scientists unravelled the secrets of the chemicals used for the tempering of steel to make sharp and strong swords and lances and the other implements of human defence. With the expansion of the realm of Islam, Muslim scientists developed chemical substances, techniques and apparatus which gave chemistry a new dimension, producing offshoots in pharmacy and medicine and new industrial processes. The labelled diagrams of experimental apparatus, the details of experimental techniques and procedures and their result, the theories of chemical reaction and the description of the properties of chemical substances which abound in Arab scientific literature are an imperishable testimony to the culture of knowledge which grew up in the Islamic State of Madina under the Prophet's fostering care.

In succeeding generations the Muslim genuises of science -- Ali Ibn Isa, Hamid Abd al-Latif, Jabir Ibn Sinan al-Battani, al- Mahani, Ibn Yunus, Jabir Ibn Al Falah, Jabir Ibne Haiyyan, al-Biruni, Razi and Hakim bu Ali Sina, to name only a few--were destined to dazzle the world with their theories, discoveries and inventions in science, technology and medicine. The countless Arabic words and scientific terms which figure so often in almost every European language are the living testaments of Islam's great contributions to modern sciences. In the 15th Century of the Islamic Hijra, the World of Islam, despite many hurdles, is again making its mark in science and technology.

Medicine, Public Health, Nursing

While recommending to the Muslims the power of prayer to God for treating illness, the Prophet encouraged and patronised medicine and pharmacology in the Islamic State. He paid attention to both preventive and curative medicine. He made good personal hygiene and cleanliness a part of the regimen of Islam for every Muslim; he cautioned Muslims against gluttony because over-eating causes many illnesses. "Do not eat to the point of satiation", the Prophet thus advised his people. The food he recommended, such as milk, wheat, barley, honey, dates and cheese and, once in a while, mutton and poultry, had nutritional and health-supporting contents. The Prophet laid emphasis on drinking clean water, and the sources of water supply for Madina, such as wells, natural springs and streams, were watched for cleanliness by the men of his administration.

Soon after his advent in Madina, the Prophet mobilised the community to help in keeping the city clean. His administration made arrangements for prompt garbage disposal, and more secluded places where people could answer the calls of nature were set apart. The standard of cleanliness in the Mosque and the Prophet's apartments was so good that not a speck of dirt was seen and his example was soon emulated by his Companions and the other members of the Community. The Islamic ban on pig meat almost eliminated the disease of trichinosis and prohibition on liquor reduced liver ailments and drunkenness. Praying five times a day is in itself a healthy spiritual and physical exercise and an act of discipline. The Prophet considered physical fitness important for rearing a healthy community. The Prophet encouraged curative medicine also and the physicians and surgeons of his day enjoyed his patronage.

An eminent biographer and compiler of the Prophet's Sayings Muhammad Ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, in his 9th Century book of the Prophet's Traditions, *Sahih Bukhari*, assigned a whole chapter to

Medicine in the Prophet's time and his use of it. The Prophet prescribed a herbal medicine, **Kalonji** or **black cumin** (*al-habbat-us-Sauda* in Arabic) and **Indian acacia** for treating some illnesses. A mixture of honey, milk and bran (*Talbina* in Arabic) was a popular health food used by the Prophet and many of his companions and other Muslims in Madina. When some members of the Muslim community fell ill on account of malnutrition, the Prophet supervised their treatment by getting them clean lodging and nourishing food and their health rapidly improved.

In battles, many Muslim women did nursing duties. Immediately after the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet had a medical tent erected in the compound of the Mosque in Madina where a Muslim female surgeon, *Rafaida*, treated battle casualties. The Prophet himself looked after their treatment. After the Muslim victory in Makkah, the Prophet encouraged a Christian physician, who ran a clinic, to continue rendering medical aid to the Makkans. Owing to the expansion of the Islamic Army, physicians and surgeons were trained and employed for treating the war wounded.

The use of Leeches for draining off septic blood and relieving high blood pressure was common in Arabia and many other countries at that time. In Madina and Makkah, there were practitioners of leech therapy who bred these medicinally-useful organisms and applied them to patients for a fee. According to the traditionist Bukhari, the Prophet, during a visit to Makkah for the Haj pilgrimage, had a severe headache and he allowed the application of leeches to his head to relieve the pain. (In present day France, the use of leeches for medicinal purposes is reportedly being revived). Medicinal herbs were imported in Madina from the Middle East, India, China, Egypt, and the northern rim of the Mediterranean. The masterly contributions of Hakim bu Ali Sina (Avicenna to the West) to the world of medicine and the result of his astonishing researches continue to benefit mankind even today.

The Prophet's encouragement to medicine and pharmacology gave an impetus to their systematic study and experiments in Arabia and the rest of the Empire of Islam. An Arab physician, Abd al-Latif, corrected the famous ancient Greek physician Galen's theory about the anatomy of the lower jaw and sacrum. Much of Galen's medical work travelled to Western Europe through the Arabic translations and critiques done by the famous Muslim physicians of the Middle Ages such as Rhazes, Avicenna, Averroes and Maimonides (as the West knows them). In one of Chaucer's 14th Century English novels, his doctor of Medicine speaks of his knowledge of both Greek and Arab doctors. At the time when European soldiers were waging the Crusades against the Muslims in the Middle East, Muslim medicine was being freely used to treat their wounded by the Christian physicians and it was also being practised in many parts of Western Europe.

A renowned botanist of Muslim-ruled Spain, Ibn al-Baytar, collected samples of more than 1400 plants from all over the World of Islam and wrote a book about their origin and their qualities, making it one of the great classics of botany. He also developed medical treatment for animals which assumed the name of "Baytarah" and it was transformed into "veterinary" in English. Because of the illnesses of the eye in the hot Arabian desert, Arab advancement in ophthalmology and optics was remarkably rapid.

Observing the Prophet's tradition of promoting the culture of knowledge and learning in the Islamic State, Muslim rulers in succeeding generations set up educational institutions by the thousands; promoted centres of advanced learning and research in the humanities and sciences; gave scholarships to poor students and honours and awards to men and women of learning, appointing them to positions of high responsibility. Many of them were so keenly interested in the acquisition of knowledge that they visited the seats of learning, the libraries and the laboratories of science and

medicine to meet scholars and scientists and made some of them the embellishments of their Courts.

Some men of learning in the ranks of the European Crusaders took time off the clang and clatter of battles to request audiences with Islam's Saladin the Great to have a glimpse of the Sultan's Court, especially the renowned scholars and scientists who adorned it. Responding to the request of a German Christian King, Frederick Barbarossa, Saladin had an Orrery duplicated by his Muslim scientists and sent it to him as a personal gift to help advance the knowledge of the Christian World about the heavenly bodies and their movement in the sky. When Muslim armies defeated an enemy kingdom, books of learning were sought amongst the reparations. The rapid development of the science of calligraphy, zealously encouraged and patronised by the Prophet in the Islamic State, enabled the duplication of important books by the thousands and their despatch and exchange amongst the seats of learning in the World of Islam.

When affluent Muslims set up charities, endowments and trusts, they deemed it their pious duty to apportion some of the funds for aiding educational institutions, students and persons of learning. Arab armies were ordered by the head of the Islamic State not to damage or destroy any seat of learning nor to burn the books in a library. When Egypt's Muslim Conqueror, Amr bin Aas saw the famous library at Alexandria, he gave State funds for its upkeep and improvement and donated Arabic books on religion, the humanities, science and medicine to it. When Jerusalem came under Muslim rule during Omar's Caliphate in A.D. 637, the Arab army showed immense respect not only for the shrines sacred to the Jews and the Christians but also for their ancient religious books. This was rooted in the Prophet's tradition of respect for learning and persons of learning and his passion for promoting knowledge and education in the Islamic State.

THE PROPHET'S EXEMPLARY STATESMANSHIP

Wisdom and Magnanimity

Prophet Muhammad, as God's last Messenger, preached to mankind the most dynamic religion whose pristine strength has not waned despite the passage of fourteen centuries and whose global fold encompasses more than 1.2 billion people today. The number of its followers has continued to swell with each passing year. The reasons for the astonishing sweep of Islam across the earth lie in its indestructible vigour and the extraordinary simpleness of its beliefs and rituals, the conviction that God is omnipresent and omniscient and the faith that all Muslims belong to a global brotherhood that transcends racial, linguistic and geographical barriers.

While the divine precepts of the holy Quran gave Islam its everlasting anchor, it was the many-splendoured genius of the Prophet which gave Islam the strength and thrust to surge across Asia, Africa and Europe in a remarkably short time. The Prophet's success in uniting the warring Arab tribes, in weaning them away from the worship of idols and from the cesspools of sin and in transforming them into the legions of Allah who would carry His Word to every nook and corner of the world represents the sublime of divinely-inspired statesmanship. By establishing the first Islamic State in Madina and by conducting its affairs as its spiritual and temporal ruler for a most eventful decade, the Prophet demonstrated the efficacy of Islam as a practical religion. He translated into practice every word of what he preached to his people. His brilliant stewardship of Arabia's destiny,

at a time when the odds were against him, shows what wonders an effective alliance of theory and practice can accomplish in changing the fortunes of a people.

Islamic State's Glory

As the head of the nascent Islamic State, the Prophet devised a system of government whose justness, wisdom, foresight and piety bear no parallel. As God's faithful Messenger, as a revolutionary religious and social reformer, as a courageous military commander, as an impeccably honest and judicious administrator and dispenser of justice, and as a versatile statesman, the glories of Prophet Muhammad's achievements remain unmatched. Very aptly, a British historian, John William Draper, described the Prophet of Islam as "the man who of all men has exercised the greatest influence upon the human race". Napoleon Bonaparte was so impressed by the greatness of the Prophet's achievements that, almost in the spirit of the Faithful, he said: "In a few years, the Muslims conquered half of the world. They snatched away more souls from false gods, pulled down more idols and demolished more pagan temples in fifteen years than the followers of Moses and Jesus did in fifteen centuries. Muhammad was a great man".

Prophet Muhammad, having made Madina the cradle of the Islamic State, successfully defended it against the repeated onslaughts of the pagan Makkans and their allies. Within a decade it encompassed most of the Arabian peninsula and its littoral parts. As the head and chief executive of the Islamic State, the Prophet made the pursuit of peace, justice and piety and the widest projection of the Quranic message the directive principles of State policy. The fraternal relationship which he fostered and cemented between the Muslim emigrants from Makkah and the native population of Madina and the covenants of peace and concord which he worked out with non-Muslim communities were testaments of his farsighted and remarkable statesmanship. Making equality of man the foundational prin-

ciple of the Islamic State, the Prophet endowed it with a written code, the **Covenant of Madina**, which constitutes one of Islam's imperishable legacies to the global corpus of constitutional law. It was framed in consultation with the representatives of the Muslim and the non-Muslim inhabitants of Madina and it recognised the freedom of religion for all.

Religious Tolerance

While the fires of religious intolerance and brutality burnt savagely in most parts of the then known world, the Prophet devised an enlightened and liberal code to govern the relations between the Islamic State and its non-Muslim inhabitants. He made them equal partners with the Muslims in contributing to the material progress of the State and in the enjoyment of its collective fruits and blessings. For all the protection and security which the non-Muslims enjoyed in the Islamic State, they were required to pay a very small tax or **Jizya** (just as the Muslim citizens paid the **Zakat** Charity tax to the State). Indigent and disabled non-Muslims and non-Muslim women and children were exempt from the **Jizya** tax. A part of the collection from this tax was utilised for the well-being of non-Muslim communities and repairs to their places of worship. By paying the **Jizya** tax, non-Muslims were exempted from bearing arms for the defence of the Islamic State — a compulsory duty for able-bodied Muslims.

The Prophet's eminently humane and liberal treatment of the religious minorities was in keeping with the Quranic injunction that there is no compulsion in religion. As a statesman par excellence, the Prophet rose above society's rooted prejudices and demonstrated that in Islam obedience to God's commandments and an overriding concern for the good of humanity should guide the rulers in conducting religious as well as temporal affairs and in handling the demands of statecraft. As sovereignty in the Islamic State vests in God, He watches their conduct and they are account-

able to Him and also to the people whom they govern and whose weal they must promote.

What nobler example of statesmanship can history furnish than the astounding magnanimity of the Prophet when he rode on the crest of absolute victory into the recalcitrant town of Makkah. He soared above the heights of mortal, vengeful men when he forgave the defeated pagan Makkans despite all the torments and tortures they had inflicted on him and his followers because he preached the Word of God to them and begged them to give up idolatry. He gave the defeated Makkans not only total amnesty but he also renounced the claim for the return of Muslim property which Makkah's polytheist rulers had confiscated in order to persecute the Muslims. The Prophet's generous treatment of the Makkan Chieftain, Abu Sufyan, who was his sworn enemy, by sparing his life and property when he surrendered Makkah to the Muslim army and by utilising his battle experience, after he embraced Islam, as an officer in the Islamic legion and the employment of his two capable sons in the service of the Islamic State were acts of mercy and brilliant statesmanship. There was an angelic touch in the benign manner in which he pardoned his most vicious enemies in his hour of victory in Makkah.

An eminent British historian, Stanley Lane-Poole, was so moved by this recorded spectacle of almost celestial benevolence in the panorama of Islamic history that he reverently commented: "The day of Muhammad's greatest triumphs over his enemies was also the day of his grandest victory over himself. He freely forgave the Koreysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn in which they had afflicted him and gave an amnesty to the whole population of Makkah." The Prophet's magnanimity impressed the Makkans so greatly that in a short time most of them embraced Islam. The Prophet won by a stroke of statesmanship what thousands of swords would not have accomplished.

Dynamic Foreign Policy

In the practice of statesmanship, the Prophet fashioned for the world's first Islamic State a dynamic foreign policy based on the ethical postulates of his universal religion. At no time was it tainted by aggression or duplicity or breach of plighted word by the Prophet's government. All the battles fought by the Muslims during the lifetime of the Prophet were defensive in character. He disliked war and destruction and the shedding of human blood. He laid stress on the virtue of maintaining peace, respecting the sanctity of human life and seeking a settlement of disputes through negotiations. Neither the Quran nor the Prophet called for the waging of war on non-Muslims except in self-defence, that is defending Islam and the Islamic State against aggression. In all the battles which the Muslims of Madina fought under the Prophet's command, 750 non-Muslims were killed and the Muslim loss of life was much less. The Prophet's own sword was never stained with human blood although he was a battle-tested warrior. Times out of number, the Prophet ordered his followers, even in the heat of battle, to spare the life of the defeated enemy. He waged war gallantly and humanely and once its clang and clatter were over, he sought to rehabilitate and preserve peace tenaciously.

The meticulous care with which the Prophet, as the head of the Islamic State, honoured his treaties and agreements with the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula and the littoral region, the relationship of peace and friendliness that he sought with his neighbouring States in a spirit of co-existence, the tolerance he and his administration showed to non-Muslims, particularly the Christians and the Jews, and his tireless efforts to publicise God's Message of Peace and human brotherhood all over the then known world are some examples of his statesmanship.

The World in the 7th Century

When Prophet Muhammad emigrated to Madina in A.D. 622 and began to establish the Islamic State in the matrix of this hospitable city in Arabia, the outside world was in turmoil. The Christian East Roman Byzantine Empire, ruled by Emperor Heraclius (575- 641), was locked in endless and ferocious wars with the Zoroastrian Persian Empire headed by the Sassanid Emperor, Khosrau II Parviz (590-628), for the control of West Asia and Egypt. When the Persian Army seized Jerusalem and overran Syria, Egypt and Anatolia, camping on the Bosphorous facing Byzantium (present day Constantinople), Prophet Muhammad's sympathy was for the Christians of Byzantium and not for the fire-worshipping Persian Emperor. Between A.D. 622 and 628, Heraclius's Byzantine army recovered Egypt, Palestine and Syria from Persia, and sacked Khosrau's palace at Dastagerd.

In the Byzantine Empire, the Byzantine Christian Church wielded religious power. The Christian Coptic Church was dominant in Egypt and in the Kingdom of Abyssinia ruled by the Negus. In Persia and the territories under its command, the Nestorian Christian Church had built up a good following; some of its adherents also lived in the coastal strips of Southern India. When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th Century A.D., it expanded rapidly in the territories of the Empire. The Christian Church had adopted for its expansion the administrative structure of the Roman Empire. The Germanic invasion of the Empire, the sacking of Rome by the Visigoths in AD 410, the rise of the Frankish Kingdom in Western Europe and the division of the Roman Empire between Rome and Byzantium (Constantinople) had undermined the unity and power of the Christian Church. It was also hit by doctrinal disputes over the nature of Christ, with the Byzantine Emperor, Heraclius, supporting Monothelitism which held that Jesus had two natures but operated with one; Rome opposed it. Endless disputes between Rome and Byzantium affected the power of the Christian Church, and its Asian and African followers were at times

not happy with the Church leaders hailing from Europe. In the Byzantine Empire, the Christian Bishops based at Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria and their religious Establishments were the seats of Church power.

In India, King Harsha's Hindu Kingdom controlled most of the northern part of the subcontinent while the Chalukya Hindu kingdom dominated South India. Hinduism was the most widely practised religion in the subcontinent. Buddhism, which originated in India and was respected by Harsha, had spread to the countries of South East Asia and the Far East. In China, the Tang dynasty was getting into saddle to reunify this vast country and to give a 300-year-long era of good government and prosperity. The religions of the Buddha and Confucius were the dominant creeds in China. In Japan, Buddhism and the Shinto religions had many adherents. The Americas had not been discovered.

Judaism as a religion was nowhere a political power. The Jewish Diaspora led to the emergence of Jewish communities in the lands of the Roman Empire and other non-Christian countries such as Persia and Arabia. Jews prospered in commerce, especially the credit line. When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th Century A.D., the Jews suffered persecution in some parts of the Empire. In Visigothic Spain, Judaism was proscribed but when the Muslim Arab army conquered it early in the 8th Century A.D., the Jews were rehabilitated, ushering in the Golden age of Spanish Jewry under Muslim rule.

In the Arabian peninsula, at the time when the Prophet was preaching Islam, there were more polytheists than the "People of the Book", i.e. Jews and Christians. After the Prophet's victory in Makkah, polytheist tribes in large numbers embraced Islam. Most of the Christian tribes, such as those in Najran, forged alliances with the Islamic State. Some Jewish tribes showed hostility to Islam and the

Prophet but they were defeated in military encounters and they learnt to live in peace with the Islamic State. The Prophet's orders were that no Jew or Christian should be forced to embrace Islam and their places of worship should be respected. During the lifetime of the Prophet, most of Arabia, especially the important region of the Hejaz, had come under the control or the dominant influence of the Islamic State. This in itself was a splendid achievement of its dynamic and far-sighted foreign policy under the Prophet's direction.

Foundations of State

As the Prophet neared the completion of his Prophetic Mission on earth, the foundations of the Islamic State, headquartered in Madina, were firmly laid and its external relations were rapidly expanding. The Islamic State's relations with Abyssinia were excellent. With Egypt, rapport was developing as was evidenced by the valuable gifts sent to the Prophet by its Byzantine Governor, Muqawqis, as a token of Egyptian goodwill and friendship. News of the Islamic Faith had travelled to the Nubian lands, including what is now the Sudan. Many of the littoral territories of the Arabian Sea and the Gulf, such as Bahrain and Oman, were in the Islamic State's orbit of influence. Its borders touched the frontiers of the Byzantine Empire in Syria and Palestine, and the Ghassanad Arab tribes in what is now Iraq, although acknowledging Byzantine hegemony, were showing interest in Islam and its rising power in the Arabian Peninsula. The Byzantine Empire had begun to take notice of Islam's growing influence. Its Emperor, Heraclius, although busy in warring with Persia and in settling wisely the doctrinal disputes which wracked the Christian Church, found time to discuss Islam's Message with the Arab emissary from the Prophet's Islamic State and his invitation to him to enter Islam. Sea-faring Arab traders, who undertook voyages of commerce and discovery from the Red Sea to the far away lands of the Indian Ocean, cooperated, especially after the fall of Makkah to the Muslims, in publicising the Message of Islam and news of the Prophet's achievements. The Persian Emperor, who showed dis-

respect to the Prophet's letter, was punished by God and his Empire was collapsing. After Makkah's surrender to Islam, scores of tribal chieftains from all parts of the Arabian Peninsula flocked to Madina to pledge their political allegiance to the Prophet and the Islamic State and many embraced Islam. Persia's Governor of Yemen also entered Islam. Although the Islamic State was ideological, the Prophet's State policy had a universal ethos.

The amicable relations of the Islamic State under the Prophet's direction with Christian-ruled Abyssinia exemplify one of the basic principles of his foreign policy—non-interference and mutual respect for each other's Faith, sovereignty and independence, co-existence and live-and-let-live in inter-State relations and the pursuit of peace and righteousness. The Prophet and the Negus exchanged letters and emissaries from time to time. This saw the evolution of diplomatic procedure and practice and diplomatic protocol in the Islamic State in Madina. When a goodwill delegation from Abyssinia, sent by the Negus, arrived in Madina, the Prophet played host to its members in his own home. Some of his Companions offered to have them stay in their homes, but the Prophet said that this would be his privilege because the Negus had looked after his Muslim followers when they sought refuge in his Kingdom from pagan persecution in Makkah.

Diplomatic Practices

A new leaf in diplomatic history was added when the Negus, on the request of the Prophet in Madina, solemnised his marriage in absentia with a Muslim widow, Umm Habiba, after taking her consent. News of her widowhood and distress in Abyssinia had perturbed the Prophet and he deemed it proper to assure her and her child of his protection through the bond of matrimony. She joined him in Madina.

The letters which the Prophet wrote to the rulers of non-Muslim countries, inviting them to join the fold of Islam, were couched in graceful and inspiring words and the emissaries he chose for carrying them to the courts of the mighty were trained and instructed by him and they bore themselves with courage and dignity. This was an example of the diplomatic etiquette which was developing in the Islamic State in Madina in response to its expanding external relations.

The art of negotiations is an important element in diplomatic practice; the Prophet's negotiations with foreign emissaries and with Arab tribes, such as the Hudaibya accord with the Makkans, were dignified and their objective was always peace. He insisted on such agreements being properly written and executed. In private life also, he advised his followers to reduce their verbal accords to writing. In the Islamic State's treaties and agreements with foreign governments and tribal leaders in Arabia, one can trace the beginnings of Islamic international law side by side with Islamic jurisprudence in relation to civil and criminal matters.

The promotion of trans-border trade is an important ingredient in inter-State relations; the Prophet, having gained considerable trading experience in his youthful years, gave an impetus to Madina's domestic and external trade. When Makkah came under Muslim rule, Makkan merchants expanded their trade with the countries of the Middle East, Abyssinia, Nubia and Egypt and some merchandise from Arabia travelled to Europe and South Asia also. During the Prophet's lifetime, Makkan seafarers and merchants had established contacts on India's Western coastline. Coins from the Byzantine Empire, Persia, Abyssinia and Egypt were useful to the Islamic State in developing its coinage, particularly gold and silver coins. Madina's increasing resources and economic strength under the Prophet's command gave it more domestic influence in Arabia and raised its external prestige. For the Prophet, the Islamic State was an

instrument for propagating the Message of God and the teachings of Islam.

Public Finance

The art of "state-houskeeping" is in the line of statesmanship, and in this mundane realm too, the Prophet showed an amazing grasp over the complex nature and intricacies of public finance. He imposed no onerous taxes; he innovated no exorbitant levies. He instituted a system of public finance in harmony with Quranic injunctions and the demands of social justice. It gave ballast to the nation's economy at home and furnished the means for the spread of Islam beyond the frontiers of Arabia. No prophet nor ruler can surpass the Prophet's prudent management of the economy and the careful husbandry of national resources. The institution of the Baitul Maal, a kind of state-run community chest or treasury, was an outstanding example of his genius.

Simple Life Style of the Prophet

In spite of the command he had over the hearts of his people and the power he wielded as the Ruler of Madina, the Prophet's way of life continued to be a paradigm of simplicity and honesty. Even at the zenith of his glory, the style of his attire was no different from the drab clothes he wore when the Angel Gabriel unfolded before him the Word of God at Mount Hira. He shunned the paraphernalia of power; he built no palaces; he set up no court for himself and he hired no courtly retinue. The simple, prosaic Mosque that he built at Madina was the seat of his Government and he was accessible to every inhabitant who lived in his expanding domain. In the exercise of authority, he never lost touch with his people. At times, he turned the Mosque into a parliamentary forum where the grand dialectics of public debate were conducted to discover the practical truth and to ascertain the people's will. Struck by the Prophet's simple living, an

English writer Thomes Carlyle, wrote: "No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed more as this man in the cloak of his own clouting"

Islamic State's Stability

Statesman and empire-builders, who have trodden the scene of human history often failed to build a mechanism for the peaceful transfer of power and for the continuance of the system of governance they bequeathed. Having led the people of Arabia from the darkness of their benighted, idolatrous existence into the sunshine of greatness and piety, the Prophet established no dynasty nor did he invest himself with the regalia of kingship. Yet the political institutions he established were so sound and durable that when he was sadly no more amongst the living, the nascent Islamic State experienced no pangs of a succession struggle and the mantle of authority was passed on to the first Caliph in a peaceful, orderly manner, with the consent of the governed. A British biographer of the Prophet, Montgomery Watt, took particular note of this admirable forte in his practice of statesmanship and his administrative skill, and wrote: "When Muhammad died, the State he founded was a going concern, able to withstand the shock of his removal and, once it had recovered from the shock, to expand at prodigious speed".

Chapter 9

THE STATE AND THE WELL-BEING OF THE NON-MUSLIMS

The Prophet showed exemplary tolerance, justice and fairplay to the non-Muslims in the Islamic State. Religious tolerance is one of the hallmarks of Islam. The Prophet practised the Quranic injunction that there should be no compulsion in religion and that non-Muslims should not be converted to Islam by force. In administering the world's first Islamic State in Madina, Prophet Muhammad followed these divinely-ordained tenets sedulously and established a just society in which the person, property and religious beliefs of the followers of other religions were protected and respected.

A written law, the **Covenant of Madina**, which the Prophet promulgated in the Islamic State after consulting its Muslim as well as non-Muslim representatives, guaranteed the freedom of religion to its people. He made the non-Muslim citizens equal partners with the Muslim citizens in its material progress and wealth. Its legal code gave non-Muslims the freedom to pursue their religious beliefs and their places of worship were made secure. Their property and other worldly assets enjoyed the State's protection. They were free to engage in the vocations of their choice, enter into business and spend their wealth as they pleased. The **Jizya** tax they paid to the Islamic State was very small. They were the State's responsibility or **Zimmis**.

Persuading the Polytheists

Despite Islam's iconoclastic thrust, the Prophet did not use force to compel the polytheists in Madina's population to embrace Islam. He relied on the power of persuasion to wean them away from the idols they worshipped, and he and his Companions missed no opportunity to tell the polytheists about God and Islam. When the legion of Islam conquered pagan Makkah under the Prophet's command, no polytheist was put to the sword because of his religion. But the cleansing of the holy Kaaba, where the polytheists had illegally installed 360 idols, was essential in order to restore its Abrahamic monotheistic character. The Quran commanded Muslims to convey to the polytheists the Islamic message because they were unaware of it. Thus it was persuasion and missionary work which the Quran recommended for encouraging the polytheists to enter Islam.

As for Jews and Christians, the Islamic State gave them a special consideration because the Quran described them as "People of the Book", their Prophets and Scriptures being God-sent and recognised as such in the Quran. While a Muslim male could not marry a polytheist woman unless she embraced Islam, Islam permitted him to marry a woman of the Jewish or Christian faith without her becoming a Muslim and she was allowed to follow Judaism or Christianity while lawfully wedded to a Muslim husband.

State Policy

In shaping the Islamic State's policy towards the non-Muslims, the Prophet was guided by the specific instructions contained in the Quranic Revelations to him. The thrust of the Quranic guidance was that force should not be used for converting non-Muslims to Islam, that knowledge of God's Message should be conveyed to them in a gentle way and that generous tolerance be shown to them.

As regards the polytheists or idol-worshippers who were a major element in Arabia's population, the Quran, in Chapter 9 verse 6 said:

"If any one of the idolaters seeks protection of thee, grant him protection so that he may hear the Word of Allah, then convey him to his place of security. That is because they are people who have no knowledge."

As for the **People of the Book**, namely **Jews** and **Christians**, the Prophet gave them a special status in the Islamic State because their Prophets were God-sent. The Quran said: "We verily sent our Messengers with clear proofs and revealed with them the Scripture." (VII-25); "And Allah sent Prophets as bearers of Good tidings and as warners and revealed therewith the Scripture" (II:213); "Lo! We did reveal the **Torah** wherein is guidance and a Light" (V: 44): "And We bestowed on him (Jesus) the Gospel wherein is guidance and a Light" (V: 46) and "So believe in Allah and his Messengers" (III: 179).

About the Christians, the Quran gave this additional counsel to the Prophet: "And nearest among them in love to the Believers wilt thou find those who say 'We are Christians', because amongst these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world and they are not arrogant." (V: 85) The name of Jesus as God's Prophet is mentioned 25 times in the Quran; it has a whole Chapter (Maryam: XIX) devoted to the Blessed Mary which mentions the Virgin Birth and extols her virtues. Worshipping the One and Only God whom Prophet Abraham worshipped, Prophet Muhammad respected Prophet Jesus as a Messenger of God (but not as God or the son of God). This was in keeping with the Quranic revelation and the monotheistic basis of Islam. According to the Quran, Prophet Jesus was lifted up into the heavens, not crucified. (In Christianity, the Unitarian Church is based on the conception of God in one person, thus opposing the Trinity concept. John Biddle (1615-62) founded English Unitarianism in the wake of the Reformation of Christianity. In early Christianity, the Basilidans were of the belief that it was not Jesus but Simon the Cyrenian who was crucified by the Roman soldiers).

Aside from the Covenant of Madina, the Prophet, as the head of the Islamic State, signed agreements with the **polytheists** when they inclined towards peace, such as the **Treaty of Hudaibya** with the Makkan pagan emissaries. His treaty of protection to the **Jews of Bani Auf** near Madina reads: "The Jews of Bani Auf and the Muslims shall be regarded as one community (Ummat). They shall help each other in the defence against any aggression. Their relations shall be determined by a spirit of goodwill and mutual respect. The allies of the Jews shall be a party to this Treaty. The oppressed shall in all cases be helped." The Prophet's pledge to the **Christians of Najran** in a formal agreement reads: "To the Christians of Najran and the surrounding territories, the security of God and the pledge of His Prophet are extended for their lives, their religion and their property... There shall be no interference with the practice of their Faith or their observance; no Bishop shall be removed from his Bishopric nor any priest from his priesthood. And they shall continue to enjoy everything, great and small, as heretofore; no image or cross shall be destroyed; they shall not oppress nor be oppressed..."

A British historian, J.M. Roberts, in his 1985 book, **The Triumph of the West**, wrote: "...There are in Islam interesting and suggestive parallels with Christianity. Both Faiths make or made absolute demands on the intellect; they require acknowledgement that they are true. Both are monotheistic, in this respect similarly indebted to roots deep in the cultural inheritance of the tribal societies of the Middle East which spoke Semitic languages. Both are religions of the Book--the Christian Bible and the Muslim Koran..."

Peace and Compassion

In preaching the tenets of Islam, the Prophet laid stress on the virtue of maintaining peace and respecting the sanctity of human life. This was a directive principle of state policy in the Islamic State which was being shaped in Madina under his direction. Neither the holy Quran nor the Prophet called for the waging of war against the

non-Muslims, except in self-defence or when they were engaged in plots to destroy the Islamic State. Islam is categorically opposed to aggression. Jihad or holy war was enjoined upon Muslims only in self-defence or against those who attacked Islam or committed aggression on Muslims. Once a war was terminated, the Muslims, in conformity with the Prophet's teaching and his example, showed mercy and generosity to the defeated non-Muslims, permitting them to follow their way of life and religious belief and to engage in business and vocations.

While conducting the affairs of the Islamic State, the Prophet followed the Quranic injunction: "fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Verily, Allah does not love the aggressors". In order to avoid bloodshed and in the pursuit of peace and co-existence, the Prophet concluded treaties and agreements with non-Muslim tribes and neighbours which in the process of implementation some times worked to the disadvantage of the Muslims. But he never violated his plighted word and strictly adhered to the spirit and letter of the agreements he signed and the covenants he entered into. Soon after he had signed the truce accord of Hudaibya with the Makkan pagan emissaries, two Muslims, who were in fetters and were persecuted by the Makkans, sought refuge with the Prophet's army. Telling them that this would be a breach of the truce agreement, he persuaded them to return to Makkah and he prayed to God for their safety and freedom. In a year's time, Makkah was captured by the Prophet's Army and these two Muslims were freed and they joined their brothers-in-faith. Seen in the context of the Prophet's magnanimity to the defeated Makkans, his chivalry, his tolerance and his generosity to the vanquished are models of human greatness. Even those enemies and spies who sought to kill the Prophet were usually pardoned by him. Always considerate to the emissaries, the Prophet felt angered by the words used by a representative of a tribe in Yamamah one of whose men, Musaylimah, falsely claimed prophethood, but as he was a tribal

emissary, the Prophet let him go back from Madina in peace. Whenever a tribe took to the path of rebellion or belligerence towards the Islamic State, the Prophet's initial effort was to persuade it through negotiations to agree to a peaceful settlement. Force was resorted to only when its aggressiveness became intolerable and it began hostile action against the Islamic State. Military preparedness was essential for Madina's survival.

As the Messenger of God whose mission was to lead mankind towards the path of peace, justice, brotherhood and righteousness, the Prophet's soldiers were under strict orders from him not to disfigure the corpses of the fallen enemy, not to kill the wounded foe and to spare the life of the adversary who surrendered and sought mercy. He welcomed his worst enemies into the Islamic fraternity the moment they embraced Islam. When some of his Companions doubted the sincerity of an erstwhile enemy who pronounced the Kalima or the Islamic oath of allegiance to God and belief in Muhammad's Prophethood, the Prophet asked them not to doubt their faith and leave it to God to decide.

Jews and Christians in Arabia

In his dealings with the Jews and Christians, whom the holy Quran described as the People of the Book, the Prophet showed immense goodwill, accommodation and understanding in harmony with the Quranic tenet that their Prophets were God-sent who conveyed to them God's Word. The Islamic State respected their Scriptures and their places of worship. It did not interfere in their internal affairs nor were they ever forced to convert to Islam. The Prophet strictly observed the agreements which he concluded as the head of the Islamic State with the Jewish and the Christian tribes in Arabia. When some Jewish tribes violated the agreements or broke their pledges to the Islamic State and engaged in subversive activity, only then the Prophet felt compelled to take punitive action. The provocative acts of the Jewish tribe of Banu Qainuqa forced the

Muslims to lay siege to their fort and when they surrendered the Prophet showed them clemency.

In his own household, one of his wives was a former Jewess and another was once a Christian and he married them with their consent when they embraced Islam of their free will. Like his other wives, he treated them with affection and respect and expressed his reverence for Prophets Moses and Christ and all the other Prophets mentioned in the *Torah* of the Jews and the Old Testament of the Christians. In dispensing justice, the Prophet treated Muslims and non-Muslims equally; a Muslim who wronged a non-Muslim was given due punishment by the Prophet in Madina and by his judicial officers, the *Kazis*, in the territories outside.

The Christian tribes, which entered into a treaty relationship with the Islamic State, enjoyed autonomy in their internal and religious matters and they maintained their links with the Christian Churches outside Arabia. When the Prophet invited the Byzantine Christian Emperor to enter the fold of Islam, he also sent a similar letter to the Christian Patriarch in Jerusalem. The Prophet had a number of scholars in the Islamic State who had studied Judaism and Christianity and their holy books and knew their original languages. When dealing with the Jews and the Christians, the Prophet consulted these scholars. He took a keen interest in the narratives he heard from his Companions or the officers of his administration when they returned from abroad. Some Christians and Jews were employed by the Islamic State.

When the Prophet's Mission of God's Messenger began in Makkah in A.D. 610, Christianity was neither a political power nor an entrenched religion in Arabia. There were Christian communities in Yemen and Najran in Southern Arabia and in the northern parts of the Peninsula. Some of the well-known Christian tribes were those of Bakr, Taghlib and Tamim, Bani Tayy, Bani Juzzam and those of

Dumat-al-Jandal. Small Christian settlements were scattered in Arabia's coastal and border region. Makkah had a few respected Christian families such as those of Warqah bin Naufal, Abdullah bin Jash, Osman bin Al-Hwayrith and Ummayah bin al-Salt. In Madina, there were a few Christians. But Christianity was not a major force in Arabia and it had not made an impact on the Bedouin Arabs most of whom at that time were polytheists, worshipping the stone deities installed in the Kaaba by pagan tribal chiefs. Arabia's three important neighbours were Christian States: in the north was the East Roman Byzantine Empire and in the north-west was the Byzantine Governorate of Egypt, in the south was Abyssinia which wielded hegemony over Yemen for some time. The Persian Empire of the fire-worshipping Khasrau Parvaiz wielded influence in Yemen and its neighbourhood and for a short time in Syria and Palestine.

As the Islamic State grew in strength from its base in Madina under the Prophet's leadership and Islam spread, some conflict with some Jews and Christians in Arabia became inevitable. They did not acknowledge Prophet Muhammad as God's Prophet and some Jewish tribes intrigued with forces hostile to Islam to smother the nascent Islamic State. In the closing years of the Prophet's life, the rapid expansion of the Islamic State had begun and in its northward march it was bound to clash with the Byzantine Empire. Initially, the Prophet endeavoured to build up a friendly relationship with Emperor Heraclius of the Byzantine Empire by sending to his Court in Jerusalem a well-trained emissary with a polite letter inviting him to enter Islam. The Christian Emperor treated the Prophet's envoy, Yahya bin Khalifa Kalbi, with respect and dignity, asking him to read the letter in the court; he made many inquiries about Islam and the Prophet from his emissary, from a former Arab Christian, Adi of the Tayy tribe and from a visiting Makkan merchant, Abu Sufyan. If he had his way, it is likely that he would have sought a political alliance with Madina but his Generals, with their ego inflated by their victories against the Persian Empire, saw danger signals in the rising power

of Islam and preferred military means to bar its surge beyond Arabia. God willed otherwise and within a score of years most of Byzantine's prized possessions in West Asia and Egypt were absorbed in the Empire of Islam. Emperor Heraclius, it is said, had a dream in which he saw a man, resembling the Prophet, who would capture Syria.

During the Makkan period of his life, the Prophet gained considerable knowledge of Christianity and knew many Arab Christians. At the age of 12, when his Uncle took him on a trading mission to Syria, it was a Christian monk, Bahira, who saw the young Muhammad in the town of Bostra and divined that he was the Prophet whose coming was forecast in the holy books. A decade later, when he himself was heading a trade caravan to Syria, a Christian monk, Nestor, saw him in Bostra and said that he was the Promised Prophet. When he was forty and the Angel Gabriel intimated to him in the cave of Hira that he was chosen to be God's Messenger, his wife, Khadijah, accepted him as a Prophet and took him to her cousin, a Christian scholar, Warqah bin Naufal, for advice who, after hearing an account of the Angelic visitation, said that Muhammad was God's Prophet. God's Message in the holy Quran, which Prophet Muhammad conveyed to mankind, has many contents similar to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.

During Islam's Makkan years, the Prophet designated Jerusalem, a holy city for Jews and Christians alike, as the first **Qibla** in the direction of which Muslims were commanded to turn for their prayers. The Prophet held Abyssinia's Christian ruler, the Negus, in high esteem and its relations with Madina were amicable. He appreciated the rule of law in the Byzantine Empire and Abyssinia as against the absence of a proper legal system, based on justice and equity, in pre-Islam Makkah. In building up the administrative structure of the Islamic State in Madina, the Prophet took advantage of his knowledge of the Byzantine governmental machinery and its

military set-up which he had gained in the course of his trading journeys to Syria and Palestine.

Befriending People of the Book

One of the examples of the Prophet's cordiality and friendliness towards the Christians is furnished by the guarantees of protection and religious freedom he gave to the Christian tribe in Najran in Arabia. In the 9th year of the Islamic Calendar, the Prophet welcomed a 60-member delegation of the Najran Christians. When it was prayer time for them, they sought his permission to say their prayer in the precincts of the Prophet's Mosque in Madina. He allowed them to do so although some of his Companions objected to it on the ground that they were non-Muslims. He reminded them that the Quran had described the Christians as the "People of the Book" and it commanded Muslims to venerate Jesus as a Prophet of God. The Prophet's appeal to the Najran Christian delegation was to join hands with the Muslims in the common resolve that they would worship the One and Only God and obey His commands. The Prophet exerted no pressure on them to embrace Islam. Under the terms of their treaty with the Prophet, one of the provisions was that, in time of need, they would lend to the Islamic State 30 horses, 30 camels and 30 pieces of arms. The Prophet guaranteed the safe return of the loaned items. Their tribute to the Islamic State was to give two thousand pieces of clothing to Madina and, in return, they had the Prophet's pledge that their churches would be secure, their ecclesiastical order would be respected and would have autonomy and no one would be allowed to interfere with their religious practices. He urged them to give up usury as was enjoined by the Mosaic law, the early Christian religious code and by the Quran.

The Prophet of Islam venerated Jesus as a Prophet of God but he did not believe that he was the son of God or God himself. He insisted that there is but One God who alone should be worshipped by the Muslims. The Prophet held the Bible as a God-revealed book

but he was of the view that men had made some changes in it contrary to its Divinity. He urged Muslims to be tolerant towards the Christians and to have cordial social relations with them on the basis of the Quranic tenet that there should be no compulsion in religion and that "your Faith is good for you and my Faith is good for me."

Those who allege that Islam was spread through the sword betray a palpable ignorance of Islamic history. If there was any substance in this allegation, there should have been no non-Muslims left in the many populous countries which saw Muslim rule for centuries such as Spain, Sicily, the Balkans, India and the Philippines. The tradition and example of religious tolerance, set by the Prophet of Islam and rooted in the Quranic injunctions, was followed by his successors, the four Caliphs and their Generals in their military exploits in three Continents-- Asia, Africa and Europe. In the centuries that followed, Muslim rulers, by and large, honoured the Islamic tradition of tolerance towards the non-Muslims, especially the Jews and the Christians. In the Middle Ages, when the Jews were outcasts in Europe, they prospered in Muslim-ruled Spain and in the Arab Middle East. Despite the bitter memories of the Crusades, which the Christian powers of Europe and the Papacy waged against the Muslim East, Saladin the Great followed the noble tradition of tolerance and mercy handed down to the Muslims by the Prophet when he allowed the defeated Crusaders from Europe to return to their homes in freedom and peace and gave them the right to visit Christianity's holy places in Muslim-ruled Jerusalem. So long as the Holy City remained under Muslim rule, Christians and Jews alike enjoyed the full freedom of access and worship. The example of peaceful co-existence between the Muslims and the Christians, set by the Prophet in the Islamic State, was followed in letter and deed by Caliph Umar when Islam's victorious legion entered the Holy City of Jerusalem in A.D. 637, barely five years after the Prophet's demise. While receiving the surrender of the Christian

Commanders and their Bishops, the Caliph gave them the Islamic State's solemn guarantee of security for their lives, their homes, their churches and their crucifixes. About the Muslims' conquest of Syria and Palestine (which then had about five million people, mostly Christians) during Umar's Caliphate, a British writer, Gai Eaton, comments in his book, **Islam and the Destiny of Man**: "The Muslims showed no interest either in imposing Islam or in creating a uniform legal and political system; Christians and Jews were left to govern themselves by their own laws and the conquerors kept to their military encampments, guardians of the peace".

In sharp contrast was the slaughter of Jerusalem's Muslim population by the army of the Christian Crusaders from Europe when they captured it in A.D. 1096 in response to Pope Urban II's call at Clermont for the launching of the First Crusade as a holy war to recover the Holy Land for Christianity. A British historian, Professor J.M. Roberts, in his book, **The Triumph of the West** (page 128) notes: "So the early Crusaders had successes, in spite of mishaps on the way. Jerusalem, the Holy City itself, was retaken by them, a feat accompanied by appalling massacres of Jewish and Muslim women, children and non-combatants. The crusaders often behaved very badly".

In A.D. 1187, when the Muslim Army, led by Sultan Salahuddin Ayubi (Saladin to the West), inflicted a crushing defeat on the European Crusaders in the great battle of Hattin near Tiberias and recovered Jerusalem for Islam, his treatment of the vanquished foe was so generous that his Frankish opponents made him a legend, claiming that "he must be a secret Christian"; they even invented a Christian mother for him, "supposedly a French noblewoman". His celebrated encounter with King Richard I of England during the Third Crusade in A.D. 1189, when Saladin allowed the defeated English monarch to return home in dignity and peace, along with his disheartened Crusaders, remains an unmatched classic in the annals

of chivalry. A revival of the spirit of concord, mutual tolerance and cooperation, which was the basis of the covenant of the Prophet of Islam with the Christians of Najran fourteen centuries ago, is the need of the hour. If the enemies of the Second World war can become the best of friends and allies, there is no reason why Christians and Muslims should not be good friends in fellowship and devotion to God.

Chapter 10

THE ISLAMIC ECONOMY AND THE WELFARE STATE

The establishment of a just socio-economic order, free from the exploitation of man by man and taking care of the basic human needs of every inhabitant, was envisioned in the Message of the holy Quran. Prophet Muhammad translated it into a reality in the Islamic State. The Quranic commandments of economic justice, honesty and fairplay in individual and collective dealings and social assistance for the needy and the indigent could not have been implemented without the spiritual and moral transformation which the Islamic Revolution brought about in the Muslim community in Madina and the territories under its control. The Islamic economic system, ushered in by the Prophet in the Islamic Realm in the Arabian Peninsula, took firm roots in a few years and flourished because of its intrinsic justness and the high moral standards of those who embraced Islam under the Prophet's guidance.

Social Justice and Morality

Islam pays due attention to man's spiritual and material needs — the health of the body as well as the soul. The Prophet never asked his followers to become ascetics or hermits in secluded monasteries. He asked each one of them to enjoy God's bounty on earth, to lead a full and vigorous life as an active member of society, to earn a livelihood, to raise a family and to contribute to economic activity and the production of goods and services. Islam expects that after meeting his own needs and those of his dependents, a Muslim should spend whatever he can spare in acts of charity to please God and earn a reward in the Hereafter.

The socio-economic order which the Prophet introduced and nourished in the Islamic State was neither a regimented economy nor a wholly *laissez faire* system. Its basis was the foundational belief that the earth's resources are God's creation which belong to Him and that Man, as God's Vicegerent in the world, holds them in trust. Therefore, he is accountable for the way in which he uses God's bounties and he is liable to be punished if he misuses or abuses them. The acquisition of material possessions should not be the sole purpose of his life; while satisfying his own needs he should not default in his obligations to God and to society. As Islam lays emphasis on human brotherhood, the Prophet's Islamic economic order sought to remove socio-economic injustice, promote an equitable distribution of wealth, generate maximum employment, increase productivity, discourage conspicuous consumption and create a caring society in which human welfare was a major goal of public endeavour. It showed respect for the dignity of man and it created an environment in which he was enabled to make the best use of his God-given talents and to develop his personality for his own good as well as of society.

Socio-Economic Development

At the time when the Prophet launched the Islamic Movement in Arabia, the economy of the populated parts of the largely desert peninsula was predominantly pastoral and nomadic. Life in the oases was comparatively tolerable but in the desert wastelands, the roaming nomadic Bedouins battled tirelessly against the unkind elements to survive. Looting a trading caravan was a way of life for some tribes. When the Prophet established the Islamic State in Madina, his first and supremely important task was to protect it from the predatory pagan Makkans who had sworn to destroy Islam. Its defence would not have been possible without reinforcing the Islamic character and moral fibre of the Muslim emigrants and the converts to Islam in Madina. While waging defensive battles for the safety of Madina, the Prophet took farsighted measures to establish internal law and order, to increase production of goods and services,

to reduce unemployment and help the needy and to mobilise resources for sustaining the Islamic State and its governmental machinery. He created a number of institutions of government which were expanded under the rule of the Caliphs who followed him, particularly the charity tax of **Zakat** and the Community Chest of **Baitul Maal**. His most revolutionary economic reform was the abolition of usury which in Arabic means **Riba**.

Even as a child, the Prophet was aware of the importance of productive labour in a socio-economic setting; he was a shepherd to his Uncle, Abu Talib's flock of goats and sheep. Being an orphan, he was his Uncle's ward who fed and clothed him. In return, he served his Uncle by taking care of some of his worldly possessions. As he grew to be a teenager, he gained knowledge of trade and commerce in Makkah from his Uncle and his merchant friends. Many years before his Prophetic mission began, he went with trading caravans to Syria and other neighbouring countries. He was so fair and honest in his dealings that the Makkans called him "the Trusted One" or **Amin** and they kept their money and goods in his care. It was his exemplary honesty and his business acumen which impressed a rich Makkan widow, Khadijah, on whose behalf he had undertaken trans-border trading missions, and she married him. He was well-versed in the commercial and monetary practices of his time and he had an ingrained dislike of usury because of its oppressive character.

The Prophet was acquainted with agriculture not only in Arabia but in the other Middle Eastern countries which he visited on trading missions. He knew how market forces worked in trade and business and how the rich exploited the poor in the rat-race for more wealth and power. The Prophet hated the degrading institution of human slavery even before God commanded him to spread His Word. Thus when the Prophet was entrusted with the stewardship of Madina, he had deep knowledge of the economic forces which influenced man and human society.

In A.D. 622, when the Prophet and many of his Muslim followers emigrated from pagan Makkah to Madina in response to the invitation from its civic leaders, they brought with them no wealth. So each one of them had to work hard to earn a living. As the Ruler of Madina, the Prophet was determined not to be a burden on the city's skimpy resources. Of paramount and urgent importance to him and his Companions was the security of Madina and its defence against the pagan Makkans who wanted to obliterate Islam. Onerous levies and taxes did not figure in his concept of public finance. Raising and maintaining a standing army for Madina's defence would have entailed a huge expenditure. So every able-bodied Muslim male became Madina's voluntary defender under the Prophet's command the moment it was under attack. After the battle was over and the enemy was defeated, the military hardware, the baggage animals, the accoutrements, the food supplies and the gold and silver left by the fleeing enemy became the spoils of war for Madina's Muslim defenders and their allies and the booty was divided amongst them, with one-fifth going to the Islamic State under the Prophet's command. This inflow of resources helped in financing Madina's defence and in building up the defensive strength of the Islamic State. It also contributed to the State-run Treasury or community chest, the **Baitul Maal**—which the Prophet's administration had created for extending social assistance to the poor, the needy and the disabled, especially those maimed in battles.

Under the Prophet's rule, Madina's economic life was not regimented in any manner. Islam allowed private ownership of property and every individual had the right to earn his livelihood and pursue the vocation of his choice. The Prophet's instructions to his Muslim followers were to earn a living by honest means, to shun pomp and ostentation, not to cheat and not to deprive anyone of his share and assets, to be fair in all transactions and to honour one's pledge and commitment, and to pay the workers' wages promptly. The trading community in Madina was free to conduct its business but hoarding, profiteering and the extortion and cheating of the consumers were

not allowed. The Prophet and his Companions visited the city's markets from time to time, checked the merchandise and the prices charged by the traders and helped in maintaining the flow of food supplies to the city if there was a breakdown. Once the Prophet detected rotten wheat being sold by a shopkeeper; he was sternly warned. Madina's trading caravans were accorded protection by the Prophet's administrators against plunder by hostile tribes or bandits in the desert. As the Prophet's administration in Madina became firmly established and speedy justice was meted out to the culprits, the incidence of thefts declined rapidly—much to the relief of its law-abiding inhabitants and the local traders.

Economy in Expenditure

The example set by the Prophet himself by practising exemplary frugality in household expenditure and by following a simple lifestyle impelled Madina's Muslim citizenry to do likewise. A social environment was thus created in Madina in which its non-Muslim citizens also started shunning ostentatious living and what today's economists call conspicuous consumption. The Islamic State encouraged an increase in the production of goods and services because it also catered to the basic human needs of the poor and the disabled, especially food, clothing and shelter. The training of artisans helped improve the quality of products and services and provided more job opportunities. Agriculture and cattle-raising were encouraged in the Islamic State. Madina's inhabitants were urged by the Prophet to cultivate more land and any citizen who undertook the cultivation of fallow land was given its ownership. The Prophet said: "Let him who owns land cultivate it; if he cannot do so, let his brother cultivate it". As the territorial dimensions of the Prophet's Islamic State expanded, he and his administration motivated people to till fallow and unclaimed land and he conferred proprietary rights on them. Amongst the new farmers were some who had indulged in highway robbery in the pre-Islam period and whose lives and vocation were transformed by their conversion to Islam.

Few Taxes, More Relief

As the Islamic State in Madina grew in stature and authority, the Prophet invested it with an administrative machinery and the base of public finance was expanded. The principal sources of income of the Islamic State were from the **Zakat** charity tax levied on Muslims, the **Jizya** tax paid by non-Muslim citizens, the **tribute** received in the form of goods, gold and silver from the tribes and territories which came under the control or protection of the Islamic state and the one-fifth share in war booty. Although conceptually the **Zakat** charity figured in early Judaism and Christianity, it was Islam which defined it precisely, named and quantified the assets on which it was to be levied and the eight purposes for which the collections from the **Zakat** tax were to be utilised, as was specified in the Quranic verse (9:60), namely: (1) helping the poor; (2) helping the destitute and needy, (3) paying those employed to collect and administer the **Zakat** money, (4) helping those whose hearts have been recently reconciled to the Truth (to Islam), (5) helping to free those in bondage (slaves), (6) helping those in debts, (7) in the cause (and service) of God, and (8) helping the wayfarer. As a tenet of Islam, the Quran places the **Zakat**, in importance, next to prayers to God. The **Zakat** is mentioned in 32 verses in the Quran; in more than 90 Quranic verses, God commands the rich to contribute willingly to help the destitute and for other social welfare purposes. The citizens of the Islamic State also donated alms or **Sadaqat** to help the needy and the indigent and it usually went to the State-managed Community Chest or **Baitul Maal**.

The **Jizya** tax paid to the State by the non-Muslim residents was partly used for meeting defence expenditure and some of it was utilised for the repair of Churches and Synagogues. Non-Muslim visitors who did not reside in the Islamic State and non-Muslim women and children did not pay the **Jizya** tax. Destitute non-Muslims were also exempted from the **Jizya** tax. Those non-Muslims who paid the **Jizya** tax were guaranteed the full protection of the Islamic State and they were not required to bear arms for its defence.

The **Zakat** tax was in a way an anti-poverty programme of the State for social assistance to the indigent members of society; it worked as a brake on the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few and it prevented extremes of wealth and poverty. Because of the smallness of the **Zakat** tax, it did not discourage savings nor its investment in gainful economic activity. As Muslims considered it a payment in the service of God, they gave it willingly to the staff employed by the Islamic State for its collection and disbursement and for the maintenance of its accounts. **Zakat** was payable only by such Muslims as were "persons of means" or **ahl-e-nisab**; others were exempted. The Islamic State properly maintained the accounts of the collection from **Zakat**, the **Jizya**, the **Sadaqat** and the **tribute**. The Prophet and a team of his Companions scrutinised them from time to time and, when necessary, explanations were called for from the officers of the State in regard to the collection and use of State revenues.

Zakat Charity Tax

Seen in the context of Quranic instructions and the Prophet's sayings and actions, **Zakat** is a wealth tax imposed on the affluent Muslims to help the poor. It covers a Muslim's worldly possessions--his cash, gold and silver, his merchandise, his agricultural produce, his cattle and other material wealth. An annual payment of two and a half per cent of the value of one's wealth as the **Zakat** charity tax to the State, to be used for the benefit of the physically and economically disadvantaged section of society and for certain other specified purposes of social and public good, was by no means an onerous levy on the Muslim citizens of the Islamic State. During the Prophet's lifetime, **Zakat** was the only tax which the Muslims paid to the State. The Prophet did not impose any cess or levies on the citizens to finance the military operations of his Government for the defence of the Islamic State. At times when resource mobilisation for a battle became a desperate need, the Prophet would appeal to the Muslim citizenry to make voluntary contributions in the form of cash or bullion or weapons or transport animals for the defence of

Madina. In the Islamic **Zakat** institution we see the beginnings of the present day concepts of the Welfare State, social security and social assistance. Similarly, the agricultural tax of **Ushr** on Muslim-owned farmlands in Madina was very low and the collections from it were used for public welfare, particularly for helping the poor.

One of the eight purposes for which the collection from the **Zakat** tax was utilised under the Prophet's direction was to help the travellers or wayfarers. As a teenager in Makkah, the Prophet was an active participant in the setting up and running of a social welfare agency, the **Hilful Fudool**, amongst whose aims and objects was to help the traveller. As the ruler of the Islamic State in Madina, the Prophet, through the **Zakat** charity tax, made Travellers' Aid a part of the State's responsibilities. The use of the **Zakat** fund for helping the wayfarer enabled the Islamic State to build a number of travellers' lodges on the highways where the wayfarer could stay for free during his journey. This facility was availed of by Muslims as well non-Muslims although these hostels were built with the **Zakat** contribution of Muslims. In the centuries that followed, Muslim rulers built an enormous number of travellers' lodges in all the countries which came under Islam's flag. This also encouraged tourism and trade.

By including the freeing of slaves amongst the eight uses of **Zakat**, the Prophet gave institutional meaning to his strong opposition to the ancient institution of slavery. Money from the **Zakat** collection was utilised to help slaves in purchasing their freedom from their owners. The Prophet made it one of the responsibilities of the Islamic State to help free slaves and generated the funds for it through **Zakat**, thus making the **Zakat-payer** a partner in this noble and humanitarian task.

Accountability and Audit

When Madina's Islamic State posted governors to the territories under its control, such as Najd, Yemen, Bahrain and Najran, their letters of appointment carried specific instructions about their duties

and the taxes they should collect. They were forbidden from accepting any personal gifts, expropriating anyone's land or other assets or imposing any levy not authorised by the Madina-based Government. The Governors were handpicked by the Prophet on the basis of their devotion to Islam, their morals and character, their administrative abilities and their sense of honesty and compassion. They had to send written reports to the Government in Madina and the Prophet looked into them personally. He took prompt corrective measures whenever any complaint was received from the public about the conduct of an officer of the Islamic State which, on investigation, was found to be true. During a military operation, the Prophet learnt that some Muslim soldiers had seized a few goats belonging to a tribe without paying compensation and were cooking their meat for food. The Prophet had the cooking utensils emptied and strongly reprimanded the soldiers for breaching God's law. The tribe was given compensation for the loss it had suffered.

Usury Abolished

The abolition of usury or **Riba** in the Islamic State under the Prophet's stewardship and in compliance with the Quranic injunction was one of the outstanding achievements of the Islamic Revolution in Arabia. Usury was forbidden for Jews under the Mosaic law and Christianity also disapproved of it, but it had become a permanent feature of the fiscal system in every country during the pre-Islam period. In Makkah, the Jews, and the polytheists engaged in money-lending and charged exorbitant interest. In Madina, some of its rich families were of Jewish money-lenders. The debtor had no protection and if he defaulted in paying the bloated interest in time, the principal was inflated by 200 to 400 per cent. The money-lender humiliated and oppressed the debtor, seized his property and his wife and children and made them do slave labour. The Prophet was so touched by the plight of the oppressed and exploited borrowers that even before his Prophetic Mission commenced, he helped many debtors in Makkah to get rid of the clutches of the money-lenders.

Three years after the Prophet migrated to Madina, a strongly-worded Quranic revelation (3:130-2) ordered Muslims to keep away from **Riba** or usury. Another Quranic revelation in the last years of the Prophet's divine Mission contained God's condemnation of those who took usury. In his last Haj sermon, the Prophet outlawed usury and ordered the remission of all interest-bearing loans, including those given by his own Uncle. Islam prohibited usury because it violated the morality of the Islamic value system. Instead, the Prophet encouraged equity-based financing of trade and other economic activity on a profit-or-loss sharing basis.

Public Welfare Measures

The Prophet, during his lifetime, had given the ruling that neither he nor any member of his family would be entitled to a share in the collections from the **Zakat** charity tax or the alms given to the community chest, the **Baitul Maal**. Two close relatives of the Prophet approached him with the request that they should be given some help from the **Baitul-Maal** for their marriage but he did not accede to their wish. The Prophet gave land for cultivation to some of his Companions who showed interest in farming; the twin objective appeared to be to enable them to earn a living and to contribute to the overall agricultural production. The Prophet did not assign to private ownership public utility resources such as natural water springs, roads, bridges and traveller's lodges. A Mosque was a House of God and no individual was allowed to own it. The Prophet induced able-bodied beggars to learn a trade or a vocation and earn a livelihood. The Prophet's household fed and took care of the Muslim devotees who sat and slept on benches in the compound of the Prophet's Mosque in Madina. In a few years, they were sent as Islam's missionaries to carry the word of God to countries far and near.

An analysis of the Islamic economic system, ushered in by the Prophet of Islam in Arabia, shows that it was welfare-oriented, and that it gave due importance to the wellbeing of the individual and his

family and to the collective good. It sought to bridge the gulf between the rich and the poor, and it promoted economic activity within a spiritual and moral environment from which social and economic injustices and oppression were removed. It fostered equity-based financing of economic enterprises.

The Prophet practised what he preached; in barely a decade of his rule over Madina he succeeded in establishing a just social and economic order which virtually transformed the nature and character of a vice-ridden people and made them upright Muslims who in a few decades conquered nearly half of the then known world.

Muslim Women in Commerce, Agriculture

Neither the Quran nor the Sayings of the Prophet debarred women from engaging in honest and decent gainful economic activity in the Islamic State in Madina. Maintaining social harmony and integrity in family life and the care of the husband and the children in the home are important responsibilities on the shoulders of the mother and housewife in the Islamic Way of life. So long as these responsibilities are not neglected, she has the right in Islam to take up decent remunerative work or engage in trade, industry and agriculture. The Prophet's first wife, Khadijah, was active in trade and commerce and invested her savings in sending trading caravans from Makkah to Syria and Palestine. The Prophet, before his marriage to her, undertook trading missions on her behalf. According to a Companion of the Prophet, Jabir ibn Abdullah, the Prophet permitted Jabir's aunt to go to the farms near Madina to get her date palms harvested and sold. This shows that some women in Madina owned farms and were engaged in agriculture.

The wife of a Companion of the Prophet, Abdullah Ibne Masud, supplemented the family income by making handicrafts and selling them. One day, a woman of Madina, Qila, called on the Prophet and sought his instructions on business practices; she purchased and sold goods. A wife of the Prophet, Zainab bint Jahsh, sewed garments and the money she got from their sale was spent on

charity. In the battles fought under the Prophet's command for the defence of the Islamic State, many Muslim women, including his wives, did nursing duties; it was voluntary work to please God and serve humanity. The Prophet commissioned Rafaida, a nurse-cum-surgeon, to set up and run a medical tent in the compound of the Prophet's Mosque to treat battle casualties. Some of the ladies of his household and the wives of his Companions taught the Quran and reading and writing to many women and children in Madina. So long as the Islamic norms of modesty, decency and morality were adhered to and the home was not neglected, there was no restriction on Muslim women in Madina to take part in a lawful business.

In Madina's Islamic State, the exploitation of man by man was not allowed. The Prophet's command was that the worker should be paid his wages on time by the employer. The Prophet urged the people to have written agreements when they engaged in a transaction, naming the witnesses. Despite the use of gold and silver coins in the State, many trade exchanges were in the nature of barter. The Islamic economic system encouraged joint ventures on a profit-and-loss sharing basis, calling them *modaraba*. Having banned Usury in the Islamic State, the Prophet thus developed an alternative method for promoting economic enterprises in the private sector. Moneyed persons invested in Merchandise for sale at home or abroad or bought property or kept their savings for profit with reputable trustees or *Amins*, like today's private bankers.

Chapter 11

HONEST ADMINISTRATION IN THE ISLAMIC STATE

One of the scintillating traits in the noble character and conduct of Prophet Muhammad was his unassailable honesty. In conformity with Quranic teachings, he commanded every Muslim to imbibe the virtue of honesty and practice it in his individual and social life. In building up the structure of the Islamic State in Madina and in training its administrators, he laid immense stress on absolute honesty on the part of what, in present day lingo, would be called the bureaucracy. Those whom he selected to be a part of the administrative machinery of the Islamic State were pious, righteous and honest Muslims who had the fear of God in their hearts and who knew that they were accountable and answerable to God and the Prophet for every act of theirs in the service of the State.

Character-building, both individually and collectively, is a prolonged process but it goes to the credit of the Prophet that those who embraced Islam in response to his teachings and put their faith in the Word of God underwent a miraculous transformation in their character, beliefs and life style in a remarkably short time and emerged as models of honesty, courage and piety.

No Bribes Allowed

The Prophet's command to the employees of the Islamic State of Madina was not to accept any gifts or gratification in private or while performing their administrative duties. Before the advent of the Prophet of Islam in Arabia, bribery, corruption and illegal gratification were rampant in every walk of life. Those who dispensed justice were easily bribed, and the illegal gratification which they accepted in the pre-Islam period was known as *Halwah* (sweets). The Prophet

banned this practice because it had promoted corruption and bribery in the administration. The Quran thus warned those who accepted bribes in order to distort the divine commands in the holy Book and to commit injustices:

"Those who conceal what has been revealed in the holy Scripture and accept paltry bribes for doing it are stuffing their bellies with the coals of fire. God will not speak to them on the Day of Judgment; nor will he cleanse or forgive them. Severe punishment awaits them." (2:174)

The Quran enjoined Muslims not to grab what belongs to others by using unlawful means and not to offer illegal gratification to the administrators or the employees of the State. According to the highly-respected Islamic scholar and traditionist, Abu Daud, the Prophet condemned in the strongest words not only the bribe-taker but also the giver of bribes. According to Islamic commandments, the accepting of a bribe is sinful and a crime, and the bribe-taker is thus a sinner and a criminal, but equally condemnable is the giver of the bribe because he corrupts and promotes sin and crime.

Honest Administrators

The principal revenues of the Islamic State under the Prophet comprised the small Charity Tax of **Zakat**, payable by Muslims of means, and the alms (**Sadaqat** in Arabic) which Muslims voluntarily gave as an offering to God. The non-Muslims paid the tiny **Jizya** tax to the State. In the early years of the Islamic State, these state collections through the employees of the Administration were mostly in the form of camels, cattle and farm produce. Female farm animals were not parted from their suckling offspring. The collections received in Madina by the Prophet's administration were duly recorded in official registers and scrutinised by the Prophet or his Companions designated for such supervisory tasks.

The Governors of outlying areas and the littoral region, such as Yemen, Bahrain, Najran and Hadarmaut, were handpicked by the Prophet himself and instructed in the ways of propagating Islam and

administering justly the area under their jurisdiction. Each one of them was given the Prophet's edicts and instructions in regard to the State collections and the style of administration. When they visited Madina, the Prophet would ask for a detailed account of their work and he discussed religious and administrative matters with them at length. He did not accept recommendations even from his closest Companions in appointing the staff to positions of administrative responsibility. He selected the most suitable personnel himself. The emoluments of the administrative staff were fixed by the Prophet.

Maximum Public Welfare

The Prophet had ruled that no part of the collection from the **Zakat** tax or alms should go to the Prophet's household or any member of his family. "It is all for the good of the people", he said. While the collections from the **Zakat** tax were utilised for the benefit of the State and the needy Muslims, alms or **Sadaqat**, received by the Prophet's administration, were used for the good of Muslims as well as non-Muslims. The Prophet gave a part of the alms to a Jewish tribe. The Prophet's wife, Safiyah, who was of the Jewish religion before she embraced Islam and married the Prophet, gave some portion of the alms to her needy Jewish relatives. Some Christian mendicants in their monasteries also benefited from the alms. The collection from the **Jizya** was utilised for the welfare of the non-Muslims, too.

In order to prevent any embezzlement or misuse of the Government's revenues, the Prophet himself checked the accounts regularly. Any one who defaulted or was found guilty of defalcation after the process of a thorough inquiry was punished. Such cases were a rarity because the Islamic character and moral fibre of the Government functionaries under the Prophet were strong and well-tested. The Management of the Community Chest or the **Baitul Maal**, from where relief and assistance followed to the needy, received the Prophet's personal attention. The staff which managed it and kept its record was selected by the Prophet himself.

No Gifts for Officers, No Corruption

After the Prophet had banned the acceptance of gifts by the cadres of his administration in the Islamic State from its subjects, an administrative officer, while rendering an account of the revenues collected for the State from the area under his jurisdiction, claimed that a part of it was his because it was given to him by the people of their free will as a token of appreciation. In an address to the Muslim community in Madina, the Prophet condemned such lapses on the part of an administrator in the Islamic State:

"How strange it is that one whom we send out as an administrator comes and tells us that this is yours and this is mine. Don't we know whether he accepts gifts or spurns them? In the name of Allah, Who owns my life, I declare that any one who thus cheats will carry a heavy burden on his neck on the Day of Judgment, whether it is a camel or a cow or a goat".

The Islamic State of Madina, under the Prophet, had entered into an agreement with a Jewish tribe in the Khaybar region of Arabia under which the tribe was required to give half of its agricultural produce to the Islamic State. When the time for the apportionment of the produce to Madina arrived, the Prophet deputed one of his devoted Companions, Abdullah bin Rawahah, to Khaybar to take delivery of the goods. The elders of the tribe, in order to give less to the Islamic State, tried to bribe him with ornaments of gold to tell the Prophet that the farm output was low. On this occasion, Abdullah bin Rawahah's address to the Jewish tribe of Khaybar constitutes an imperishable advice to all administrators: "I swear by God that not even the greatest temptation will deflect me from the path of honesty and from doing my duty to Islam. The bribe you have offered me is forbidden in Islam; it is a sin and a crime to accept a bribe. As a Muslim, I cannot even think of committing such a crime". The Jewish tribe was so impressed by the Muslim administrator's honesty and incorruptibility that its elders declared in unanimous applause: "This is the justice on which the Heavens and the earth rest".

The Prophet once said to the cadres of the Islamic State: "Those who are appointed administrators by us should be absolutely honest; they should not conceal even a needle otherwise they will have to produce it on the Day of Judgment and will be punished". In the division of war booty, utmost honesty was practised, often under the Prophet's watchful eye. Whatever was due to the Islamic Treasury or the Community Chest — the Baitul Maal — was rendered to it and accounted for. Any one who defaulted in any manner forfeited his share and was severely admonished. Such lapses were rare because the fear of God was in the heart of every Muslim. The principle of honesty and accountability was the foundation on which the Islamic State's theory and practice of public administration was erected.

Honesty in Trade

Similarly, Islam condemns and forbids malpractices in trade and dishonesty in weights and measures. The Holy Quran, in Surah Rahman, commanded Muslims to weigh the goods correctly and not to tamper with the scales for their petty gain. Those who practise dishonesty in weights and measures provoke the wrath of God and they will never prosper, according to a number of warnings in the holy Quran. The Prophet used to visit the market place in Madina off and on to ensure that the traders followed fair practices and were honest in their dealings with customers. Once the Prophet detected that a grain vendor had concealed wet and fungus-laden wheat beneath a pile of good quality wheat. He reprimanded the trader for this act of brazen dishonesty and asked the officers of his Government to inspect the wares in the shops to ensure that the consumers and customers were not cheated in any manner.

Redressing of Grievances

As the Islamic State expanded and its sway extended to other parts of the Arabian Peninsula, the Prophet posted the most honest, pious and righteous persons as administrators. They sent their performance reports to the Prophet regularly and these were checked

and counter-checked in order to ensure that no lapses and injustices occurred in the administration of the territory under their jurisdiction. Any complaint received by the Prophet against an administrator was fully investigated and he was given an opportunity to explain his case and defend himself. Those whose duty it was to administer justice in the outlying parts of the Islamic State were virtuous men, known for their honesty, integrity and knowledge of the Quranic Commandments and the rulings of the Prophet. They kept an eye on the conduct of the administrators who exercised executive authority in the area. They lived simply; pomp and show they shunned and gifts and temptations they spurned.

The Prophet's own example and the impact of Islamic teachings were major factors in making the bureaucracy of the Islamic State a model of administrative honesty and efficiency. In the gatherings of Muslims in the Prophet's Mosque in Madina, he replied to the citizen's questions about his administration of the Islamic State and the conduct of his administrators and listened to complaints and complaints with patience and sympathy and offered speedy redress. The Prophet was accessible to every citizen and he considered himself accountable before God and His people. The Islamic State's administration under the Prophet's command was never tainted by the vices of bribery and corruption. He appointed a few policemen but crimes in Madina were so few that their workload was insignificant. Disputes were often settled through reconciliation promoted by the Prophet or his Companions or the elders of the community.

Chapter 12

THE PROPHET'S OPPOSITION TO RACIALISM AND SLAVERY

The Prophet of Islam hated the institution of slavery which was entrenched in Arabia since times immemorial as in other parts of the world. Even before he embarked on his Prophetic Mission in the service of God, the Prophet showed a dislike for slavery and freed his own slave. When his rich wife, Khadijah, presented him with a slave, Zayd, soon after their marriage, he gave the teenage boy his freedom and made it known in the Makkan community that Zayd was now a freeman.

When he preached Islam in Makkah, he urged his followers to free their slaves and to earn a reward in the Heavens by buying freedom for a slave. The Prophet's deep concern for the wellbeing of slaves in Makkah was wellknown in the city of his birth. His heart was sorely touched by their plight. One day in Makkah, he saw a slaveboy cowering under the weight of the burden he carried on his back. The Prophet rushed to his help and carried on his own back most of what the boy was required by his master to carry to a destination. The Prophet was in mental anguish when he saw a slavegirl being beaten up by her cruel master in a public place in Makkah. He pleaded mercy for the bruised girl but her owner turned a deaf ear and persisted in whipping her. Sad and deeply agitated, the Prophet rushed home and told his loving wife, Khadijah, about the tragic happening and the shock this brutal scene had given him. Khadijah, who was herself compassionate and merciful, bought the slavegirl the next day and set her free. The Prophet was immensely pleased; she had done what she knew was the Prophet's wish—that slaves should be freed.

No Colour Bar

Racial discrimination and colour bar are alien to Islam. When the Prophet emigrated to Madina and established the Islamic State, making it a launching pad for the spread of Islam as a global religion, he succeeded in creating a harmonious and well-knit society in which black, brown and white were blended in the great brotherhood of Islam. He gave proof of his belief in the equality of the human race when he made a freed black African slave, Bilal, the **Muezzin** of the Mosque he built in Madina. The honour which the Prophet conferred on Bilal was unique; it symbolised Islam's war against slavery and racialism; it was a resounding proclamation of the Prophet's faith in the dignity of man. It rendered into practice the Islamic concept of human rights and universal brotherhood.

Bilal's Example

Ebony-coloured Bilal was born in Makkah, the son of an Abyssinian slave, **Rabah**, who was sold into slavery in Abyssinia and transported across the Red Sea to Arabia where a rich Makkan trader purchased him. The child of a slave, Bilal was bought in the slave Market in Makkah by another Arab merchant, Umayya, a heartless taskmaster. Bilal's owner treated him very harshly and at times tortured him brutally. Bilal's soul glowed with hope when he saw Prophet Muhammad in Makkah and heard his inspiring words about God, the Creator of the Universe, and the Islamic message of the equality and fraternity of all humankind. These were strange but stirring words for a black slave in Makkah whose body bore the marks of the tortures his owner had inflicted on him. The Prophet's words sank into the depth of Bilal's heart and he embraced Islam. He was amongst the very early Makkan converts to Islam.

When Bilal's owner, Umayya, learnt of his conversion to Islam, which to him, as an idol-worshipper, was a heresy, he flung the young slave hand-tied into a dungeon where disobedient slaves were punished. Bilal was savagely flogged until he became senseless. Even as the oiled whip cracked on his bare body, Bilal

thought and spoke of God and his Prophet. It was a test of Bilal's newly-found faith in the religion of Islam and God did not let him down. It turned out to be the day of his physical and spiritual emancipation. When the Prophet was informed, he willed that Bilal should be rescued from his tormentor and made a free man. The Prophet's trusted Companion, Abu Bakr, an affluent businessman, bought Bilal from his fiendish master and set him free. In Abu Bakar's house where Bilal found shelter and peace, the Prophet visited him and prayed for him. The wounds caused by the flogging healed soon and Bilal was nursed back to health.

Bilal's Devotion to the Prophet

In the company of his close and faithful Companions, the Prophet welcomed and embraced Bilal and inducted him into the brotherhood of Islam. Bilal was now a free man, a Muslim and a Companion of the Prophet, imbued with a rock-like determination to serve God and his Messenger. Bilal represented Africa in the early clan of Islam in Makkah. As a slave, he could never think of rubbing shoulders with the proud and some times arrogant scions of the Quraish in Makkah. As a Muslim, he sat on terms of equality with them in the Prophet's company and was considered a respected member of the brotherhood of Islam. In this divine religion of peace and the equality of man, slavery had no place. The Message of the Quran, as preached by the Prophet, was that all men and women are the children of Adam and Eve; it shattered the barriers of race and colour. In the eternal fraternity of Islam, said the Prophet, all men and women are equal.

For 22 long and eventful years, first in Makkah and then in Madina, Bilal was the Prophet's devoted Companion and the caller of the Faithful to prayer. Five times a day, from dawn to the late hours of the dusk, Bilal's prayer-call from the Prophet's Mosque echoed in Madina. It was also Bilal's privilege to wake up the Prophet every morning just before prayer time in his family apart-

ment next to the Mosque and to help in the upkeep of this House of God.

Freedom for Slaves

That Islam was opposed to slavery was writ large in the message of the Quran and the teachings and conduct of the Prophet. He exhorted his Followers to free the slaves and many followed his instructions to please him and to earn the promised reward in the Heavens. The Prophet would have outlawed slavery as an institution but fourteen centuries ago the social and economic system in Arabia was such that it would have been an impractical measure to eliminate it completely. The Prophet, therefore, prescribed it as an act of virtue for his followers to free their slaves and to buy freedom for other slaves just as Abu Bakr had bought freedom for Bilal.

The Prophet ruled that one of the purposes for which the *Zakat* Charity tax, collected from Muslims by the Islamic State, could be utilised was to buy freedom for slaves. The Prophet assisted Salman the Persian in buying his freedom from his master in Madina and then inducted him into his circle of Companions. There were many rich non-Muslims in Madina, especially Jews, who owned a number of slaves and used them as farm labour or for construction or for carrying merchandise. In the Islamic State, the Prophet urged them to be considerate to their slaves and treat them humanely. In his last Haj sermon, the Prophet said: "As for your slaves, see that you feed them with such food as you eat yourselves and clothe them with the clothes that you wear yourselves. And if they commit a fault which you are not inclined to forgive, then part with them for they are the servants of Allah and are not to be beaten."

In the same historic sermon, whose words have echoed through the corridors of time in all the centuries of Islam, the Prophet said to the huge concourse of Muslims: "O, the people, listen to and obey even though a mangled Abyssinian slave is your Emir (the Ruler) if he enforces the laws of the Book of Allah (the Quran) amongst you." The Prophet thus threw open the highest offices in the Islamic State

to non-Arabs. The Prophet employed many freed slaves in the service of the Islamic State and gave them positions of authority and responsibility. It was nothing short of a social revolution in Makkah when the Prophet persuaded his blue-blooded cousin, Zaynab, to marry a freed slave, Zayd. And when their marriage failed due to incompatibility and ended in a divorce, the Prophet married Zaynab and gave her protection and happiness in his household. Marrying a freed slave's divorced wife was unthinkable in pre-Islam Arabia.

Some twelve centuries before Abraham Lincoln waged a war against slavery in the New World, the Prophet of Islam had urged and motivated his followers to free slaves. Some of Islam's renowned Generals and administrators were former slaves who found freedom, honour, dignity and the recognition of their worth in the fraternity of Islam. Islam's precept of human equality and brotherhood, which the Prophet carried into practice, was a revolutionary doctrine. It gave Islam the universal appeal it won in a few decades, enabling it to surge across the desert of Arabia and establish itself as one of the most widely practised religions in three populous continents-- Asia, Africa and Europe.

The Prophet's Historic Sermon

Centuries before the French Revolution, the Prophet of Islam preached to mankind God's message of human equality and fraternity and sounded the trumpet of war against racism. In his last Haj sermon, the Prophet outlawed for all time any thought of racial superiority or colour bar when he declared that mankind was the progeny of Adam and no human being was superior to another human being because of the colour of his skin or his race, except in piety and righteousness. "Verily the noblest amongst you is he who is the most pious", said the Prophet. He uttered these momentous and noble words in a predominantly Arab gathering in an age when many pre-Islam Arabs considered themselves a superior race.

The Prophet's vision was global; the message of God which he gave to the world was for the whole of mankind; the religion he

preached was universal in scope and content. The colour of one's skin had no meaning or significance in the Islamic Way of Life. In the eyes of the Prophet, the criterion for respect and honour in the Muslim community was one's piety and obedience to the Will of God as revealed in the holy Quran. In developing amicable relations between the Islamic State and Christian-ruled Abyssinia, the Prophet gave another proof of Islam's universalism and the absence of any racial consideration in his thought and practice. By his precept that all those who enter Islam become part of a great Islamic fraternity, the Prophet gave Islam a powerful binding force and a global perspective which became a ballast of strength in its spectacular sweep across continents. A noted American writer, James Michener, lauded the fraternal base of Islamic society in these words: "More than most religions, Islam preaches the brotherhood of all races, colour and nations within its fold."

As a divinely-inspired statesman, the Prophet had the vision to see what lay in the womb of the future and to devise a religious order, a socio-economic system and a structure of good government that would shelter and nurture under its umbrageous canopy peoples drawn from diverse tribes and nationalities and transform them into the globe-girdling Islamic **Ummah**. To strengthen the ties of kinship amongst the members of the global Islamic fraternity, the Prophet made the annual Hajj pilgrimage of Muslims at Makkah one of the foundational institutions of Islam. Every year in the grand international assembly of Muslim pilgrims at the Kaaba in Makkah on the occasion of the Hajj, the Prophet's stirring words, spoken in his sermon on the Mount of Mercy in A.D. 632, echo in their ears: "No Arab is superior to a non-Arab and no non-Arab is superior to an Arab; no dark-skinned person is superior to a white person and no white person is superior to a dark-skinned person. The criteria of honour in the estimation of God Almighty is the individual's righteousness and piety."

Chapter 13

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE ISLAMIC STATE

More than 1300 years before the free nations of the modern world drew up and signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the Prophet of Islam unfolded before mankind a noble code of God-given Human Rights enshrined in the holy Quran. As the Messenger of God and the founder of the world's first Islamic State in Madina, he carried them into practice and demonstrated their practicability. He freed the slaves in an age when slavery was practised all over the world; he made men equal citizens in the eyes of the law. He gave rights, respectability and a high social status to women; he made the care and proper up-bringing of children the moral and religious duty of their parents. He specified the rights and duties of the citizen — Muslim as well as non-Muslim — vis a vis the State, upholding his right to the protection of his life and limb and his property by the State. He established a direct relationship between God and Man, abolishing the often misused institution of priesthood. He gave immense importance to education and freed many prisoners-of-war when they imparted literacy to the children of Madina.

Dignity of Man

The Islamic concept of Human rights, as revealed in the Holy Quran and amplified by the Prophet of Islam, accepts the world as good because it is God's world and sees a basic goodness in all human beings as a part of God's creation and as the children of Adam and Eve on earth. Because Islam's divine message is for the good of all mankind and Prophet Muhammad was sent by God as His Mercy unto the world, the enjoyment of human rights in Islam is not exclusively for any selected people or race but for all the human beings who inhabit this planet.

Recognising the existence of Good and Evil in the World and the wickedness of Satan in seducing Adam's children away from the righteous path, Islam offers hope and redemption even to those who are caught in the web of sin and pledges God's pardon to the sinner who seeks His forgiveness. In Islamic belief, all sovereignty and authority in the Universe vests in God and man on earth acts as his Vicegerent. God is the all knowing Divine Ruler and Supreme Law-giver to whom those who exercise his delegated authority on earth are responsible and it is, therefore, their duty to see to it that the Human Rights given to mankind through the holy Quran and amplified in practice by the Prophet of Islam are not violated. As the Creator of an orderly Universe of which our Earth is a part, God has ordained a parallel order, a body of laws and a noble pattern of righteousness and piety to govern human behaviour in a way that would please Him. This was the foundational principle on which the Prophet based Islam's theory and practice of Human Rights along with Man's duties and obligations in a societal setting.

Defining Rights and Duties

The divine sanctity which Islam imparts to Human Rights, so lucidly stated in the Holy Quran and exemplified or elaborated in the conduct and Sayings of the Prophet of Islam, places powerful restrictions on the authority of the temporal ruler vis a vis the citizen and it is a deterrent to State Absolutism. When the Prophet of Islam gave the punishment of death to a Muslim who had killed a non-Muslim in Madina, he made it known to the world that in Islam its law treats all human beings equally, that human life, whether it is of a Muslim or a non-Muslim, has a sanctity and it should be protected by the State and any one who violates it should be punished.

When the Prophet revolted against the prevalent savage practices in warfare and ordered Muslim soldiers never to kill a prisoner-of-war nor to mutilate the body or face of the dead enemy, he demonstrated respect for the Quranic precept that Man was God's creation. By making a freed black African slave, Bilal, the first Muez-

zin of Islam—the man who calls Muslims to prayer—in Madina, the Prophet gave proof of the universal dimension of Islam and its disapproval of slavery as an institution in society.

When the Prophet married his own first cousin to a freed slave, he gave another demonstration of his opposition to slavery and his respect for a former slave as a human being, as a part of God's creation whose well-being was his divinely-ordained mission. And when their marriage foundered on the rock of domestic bickering, the Prophet restored the broken planks of her life by marrying her with her consent at a time when no blue-blooded member of the proud Quraish tribe would have condescended to marry the divorced wife of a former slave. The Prophet's action was sanctified by a divine revelation in the Holy Quran in line with the Islamic belief that the moral law of God, as revealed in the holy Scripture, rules in all aspects of life — personal, social, spiritual, economic and political. It enhances the dignity of the individual man as a part of God's creation on earth and upholds his human rights when they are breached by oppression and injustice.

Obedience to God

While upholding the Rights of Man in the family, in society and in the State, Islam also upholds Man's duty to God by attacking idolatry because this wicked institution, in the days before the advent of Islam in Arabia, gave to stones the loyalty, worship and service which Man should render to God alone. It is also God's right that his Vicegerents on earth should obey the laws of God while exercising His delegated authority and those who default become liable to punishment. The Quran makes this axiom crystal clear when it catalogues the disasters which befell those who went astray and disobeyed God's commandments. The edifice of Human Rights in Islam is built largely on belief in God and the knowledge that He keeps a watchful eye on the conduct and actions of Man, punishing those who breach His moral code as revealed in the Holy Book.

Family Welfare

In Islam, the family is the corner-stone of the social structure, with Man and Woman as its two basic components. For the strength and durability of the fabric of family life, Islam insists on the marital bond being the only permissible basis of sexual relationship between Man and Woman for the purpose of procreation. Unlawful, unholy wedlock disrupts the family and is a threat to the moral base of human society. Making marriage a civil contract under which the rights and obligations of the husband and the wife are given a religious and legal base, the Prophet made the free consent of the male and female partners, entering matrimony, basic to a lawful marriage. Islam gave man the right to choose his wife and to the woman the right to choose her husband on the basis of mutual consent.

When a newly married Muslim girl in Madina complained to the Prophet that her father had married her to a man without consulting her or taking her consent, the Prophet allowed her to annul her marriage. In an age when no religion or society gave the wife a share in her husband's property, it was Islam which endowed her with this right and specified the share she should get under the law. The holy Quran prescribes the rules for divorce for the husband and the wife and what the divorced parents should do for the care of their child. As against certain religions and societies which burnt widows along with the dead husband, Islam and the Prophet not only gave the widow cheer and hope and the continuity of her life but encouraged her to remarry. To make the family structure wellknit and cohesive, Islam makes it obligatory for parents to take care of their children and for children to obey them and serve them in old age. "Paradise lies at the feet of the mother", said the Prophet, giving Motherhood the highest social status. The Quran commands children (17:23) to be kind to their parents, especially in their old age, never to say a harsh word to them and "address them in terms of honour".

Holy War in Self-Defence

While Islam is opposed to aggression and wars of aggression, it expects Muslim citizens to defend Islam or the Islamic State when it is under attack; this is the concept of the holy war in Islam. The Quranic injunction is that Muslims should not themselves begin hostilities but when they are attacked, they should defend their religion and their State. All the battles fought during the lifetime of the Prophet were defensive in nature. Recognising the rights of the non-Muslim citizens in the Islamic State, the Prophet totally exempted them from military duty.

Non-Muslim tribes, such as the Christians of Najran, which had a treaty relationship with the Islamic State in Madina voluntarily extended assistance of a military character to the Islamic State when it was subjected to aggression by hostile forces. But no non-Muslim was ever forced or conscripted to bear arms for the defence of the Islamic State by the Prophet or his administrators. When force was used by the State to preserve internal order or to defend Madina against enemies and invaders, the Prophet placed limitations and restrictions on the use of force and justice was tempered with mercy and compassion.

Islam's Law of Nations

In the Islamic concept of Human Rights, the obligations and duties of the individual in respect of his fellow human beings, the society of which he is a part, the state of which he is a citizen and the One and Only God he worships are as important as his own Rights. These obligations are a part of the Quranic injunctions and the Islamic Shariah based on the conduct and sayings of the holy Prophet (Sunnah). The Islamic view that rights and obligations of the individual in the Islamic State are complementary and go hand in hand is reflected not only in the relationship between Man and the State and between man and God, but it also applies to the relations

between the Islamic State and other States. The origins of Islam's International law can be traced to the Prophet's conduct of relations of the Islamic State of Madina with other States. In conducting relations with other States, the Prophet of Islam was guided by the fact that Islam is a universal religion and that it seeks the good of mankind as a whole. When the Prophet wrote letters to the Heads of many States, inviting them to join the fold of Islam, he gave proof of its universality and showed that his Islamic vision soared above the barriers of geography, race, colour, creed and tongue. The Prophet was guided by the Quranic advice (The Quran: 16:125): "Call men to the Way of Thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation and set forth your argument with them in the most gracious manner."

One of the most remarkable achievements of the Prophet of Islam was that he always translated into practice what he preached to mankind. When he spoke of human brotherhood, he established the brotherhood of Islam in Madina, putting an end to centuries-old differences of race and tribe, welding disparate elements into a single dynamic fraternity. After the bloodless conquest of Makkah, the Prophet declared: "I have trampled under my feet the differences of family, caste, tribe, race and colour. The era of darkness is over; the era of knowledge has dawned". This was one of the first milestones in the progress of Human Rights in the Islamic State under the Prophet's rule.

Welfare State

Long before the West developed ideas of the Welfare State and social assistance for the needy and the indigent, the Prophet and the Islamic social and economic system he established in the Islamic State took care of the indigent and the physically disabled citizens by instituting the charity tax of **Zakat** and voluntary donations (**Sadaqat**) for their assistance and upkeep. In a short time, the in-

stitution of the **Baitul Maal** (like the Community Chest in the USA or the State Treasury) was developed in Madina under the Prophet and the Caliphs of Early Islam. This was also an extension of the Islamic concept of Human Rights under which the dignity of the individual and his right to life and limb and the pursuit of happiness within a righteous social order was safeguarded by the State through the Ruler and his administration. The Quranic fundamental rights for man were justiciable; an aggrieved citizen could easily seek relief from the Islamic Court.

MUSLIM WOMEN AND THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE

The Prophet of Islam encouraged the Muslim community in Madina — men, women and children—to visit the Mosque he built in that hospitable city soon after emigrating from Makkah. They not only offered their prayers in this House of God but they also took part in the religious ceremonies held there from time to time. The allegation of Islam's detractors that Muslim women had no place in the Mosque is baseless. The irrefutable fact that the "Women's Door" — **Bab-un-Nisa** — has existed in the Prophet's Mosque in Madina since the time when he built it proves the falsity of this allegation.

Muslim Women Prayed in the Mosque

The Prophet's Mosque in Madina was not only a sacred House of Worship for the Muslims but the hub of their community life, both in the spiritual and temporal realms. Having conferred a high status on women, both in the family and in society, it is inconceivable that the Prophet would have denied them access to the Mosque. The chronicles of Early Islam show that one of the Prophet's trusted Companions, Omar, who later on became the second Caliph of Islam, went to the Prophet's dwelling and informed him that a number of women and children were gathered in the Mosque to meet him and, as it was getting late in the evening, he should speak to them. The Prophet immediately went to the Mosque and greeted them, invoking God's blessing upon them.

To facilitate the attendance of Muslim women in the Mosque in Madina, the Prophet had a separate entrance door erected for them through which they entered and sat a little away from where the men

prayed. They listened to the Prophet's sermon, to his exposition of the Quranic revelations and teachings and to the advice he gave to the Muslim community on religious and temporal matters. On one occasion, according to a tradition of the Prophet, a number of Muslim women, who met him in the Mosque, requested him to set apart a day exclusively for them when they could seek his guidance and instruction. The Prophet acceded to their request and met them in the Mosque. In accordance with the teachings of Islam, they dressed very modestly but there is no evidence to show that they all came heavily veiled.

On the occasion of the Haj, Muslim men and women do the religious rites together, without being segregated, and the female face is not covered or veiled, although the dress is extremely modest. Muslim women have taken part in the Haj and prayed and carried out the religious rites, along side men, right from the time of the Prophet of Islam. Therefore, there is no substance in the fiction purveyed in the West that Muslim women have no place and no role in the religious ceremonies and rites of Islam in or outside the Mosque.

The chronicles of the Prophet's lifetime show that he had granted permission to Muslim women to attend the Mosque and say their prayers, standing behind the rows of men so as not to mingle with them. His instructions to Muslim husbands were: "When your womenfolk ask you for permission to attend the Mosque, do not prevent them from doing it." While attending the Mosque, women were expected to conform to the rules of modesty and personal cleanliness prescribed by the Quran and the Prophet. For example, they were not expected to put on strong perfumes and ornaments nor immodest dress inside the Mosque. A woman who was in her monthly period of menstruation was not in a state of personal cleanliness to be in the Mosque. To facilitate the saying of prayers by Muslim women, the Prophet told them that they could also offer their prayers inside their homes. For the prayers after sunset, this facility

was particularly convenient for the women who had small children to look after in the home. It was during Caliph Umar's rule, when Madīna's Muslim population had expanded considerably and there was congestion in the Prophet's Mosque, that he instructed Muslim women to offer their prayers in their houses, instead of joining prayers in the Mosque. When some of Madina's Muslim women spoke to the Prophet's surviving wife, Ayesha, about it, she also advised them to pray in their homes. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the Prophet, during his lifetime, did give permission to Muslim women to pray in the Mosque and they did so. But he did not make it mandatory on them to say their prayers only in the Mosque; he gave them the freedom to pray in their homes as well.

In the light of the Prophet's tradition of permitting women to pray in the Mosque, the suggestion that Islam forbids the female section of the Muslim community from entering or praying in the Mosque is illogical and untrue. If proper arrangements are made in a Mosque for the Muslim women to sit separately and if they comply with the traditional restrictions in respect of dress and personal cleanliness, there is no reason why they should not attend the Mosque for prayer and other religious ceremonies. The arrangements made for Muslim women in the Central Mosque near Regent's Park in London, especially for the offering of Eid prayers, can serve as a model for the Mosques in the Western countries. The Prophet had given the Mosque a key role in the Muslim community's life and it is unthinkable that he would exclude Muslim women from it, particularly when the Quran says in words of transparent clarity: "And for women are rights over men similar to those of men over women" (2: 226). In Islam, a Muslim woman has her own independent personality. She has the right under the law to choose her husband and, if the marriage does not work, to seek a divorce. In legal terms, she is a legal person in that she can give evidence in law courts and file law suits; she can make a contract or bequest in her own name. She is entitled to inherit as a mother, as a sister, as a wife, and as a daughter. As a divorcee and as a widow, she has the freedom to marry again.

By marrying a divorcee and some widows, in order to give them shelter, respect and sustenance, the Prophet set a noble example and made the marriage of a divorcee or a widow socially acceptable and desirable. He said: "A giver of maintenance to the widows and the poor is like a bestower in the Way of God, an utterer of prayers all through the night and one who fasts constantly." As the Quran makes marriage between a man and a woman a solemn contract under the Shariah law, based on their free consent before witnesses and entered into a written document, the Prophet said: "The widow and the divorced woman shall not be married until their order (consent) is obtained and the virgin woman shall not be married until her consent is obtained" (al-Bukhari). Once a girl in Madina complained to the Prophet that her father had married her to a man against her wishes and without her consent. The Prophet gave her permission to repudiate the marriage (Abu Dawud). According to a Companion of the Prophet, Abu Hurayrah, the Prophet advised a Muslim to have a look at the woman before sending her his marriage proposal.

The Prophet strongly recommended the virtue of modesty to men as well as women in the light of the Quranic verse: "Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty, that will make for greater purity for them...and say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty and that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veil over their bosoms...and that they should not stamp their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments (24: 31). (This verse contains a list of close relatives before whom a certain degree of informality is permissible for a woman). The Prophet took from Muslim women the oath of allegiance to Allah, without touching their hands, and made them pledge that they would abstain from idolatry, adultery, infanticide, slander and theft and they would follow the Prophet's **Sunnah**. Islam's Shariah law respects the privacy of the home and commands a Muslim not to enter another person's house without taking his permission (The Quran: 33:33).

According to the traditionist Muslim, the Prophet publicly announced: "If a person peeps into somebody else's house without permission, the people of the house will be justified if they injure his eye". This demonstrates Islam's profound respect for the privacy of one's home as a basic human right and for maintaining harmony in family life.

The noble wives of the Prophet, who had their apartments next to the Mosque in Madina, also played their part in the religious and temporal life of the Muslim community, especially in the society of Muslim women. Ayesha, Hafsa and Umm Salymah were very learned, well-versed in reading and writing. They spoke to the Muslim women who came to the Mosque to offer prayers or called on them in their apartments for their advice and guidance. The presence of Ayesha in a religious festival held in the compound of the Mosque in Madina is noted in the chronicles of early Islam. Fatima joined the Prophet when he conferred with a goodwill delegation of the Christians of Najran in southern Arabia, in the Prophet's Mosque.

Settling Family Disputes

When Muslims carried their family disputes to the Prophet for his judgement in the Prophet's Mosque, both male and female parties to the dispute presented their case in person to the Prophet and he decided the matter on merit and in the light of Quranic injunctions. Very often the disputants were reconciled by the word of the Prophet.

As the area occupied by the Mosque, which the Prophet built in Madina in A.D. 622, was originally about 850 square metres, it was insufficient to accommodate the entire citizenry of Madina. But the history of early Islam does indicate that the people of Madina flocked to it in thousands, especially on Fridays and on the occasion of religious festivals, and spilled over from the Mosque enclosure to the surrounding open space. Seven years after its initial construction,

the premises of the Mosque were extended by the Prophet to cover 2025 square metres. (At present, it covers about 82,000 square metres and it is undergoing extension).

The People of the Bench — the Ahl-as-Safa — who stayed in the Mosque premises and who were trained by the Prophet as Islam's missionaries received their meals from the Prophet and his family. The food for them was cooked by the Prophet's wives and his dutiful daughters as a part of their service to Islam and to the Mosque. These trainee missionaries of Islam looked after the upkeep of the Mosque, learnt the Quran and recited Quranic verses and taught Islam to the children who came to the Mosque.

It was the custom of the Prophet to welcome the children, bless them and tell them about the Quranic teachings, inside the Mosque. Amongst the children were also little girls who came with their brothers or female elders. There was no discrimination; the girls were as welcome in the Mosque as the boys. They observed the rules of personal cleanliness and respected the sanctity and decorum of the Mosque; they also dressed modestly in conformity with Islamic teachings. If a family was short of proper clothes, the Prophet or his Companions would help them.

Marriages in the Mosque

On the occasion of marriages, the Muslim families took the bride and the bridegroom to the Prophet's Mosque for the solemnising of the marriage. Patients — male and female — went to the Mosque for the Prophet's blessings for their speedy recovery and good health. A medical tent to treat battle casualties functioned in the precincts of the Prophet's Mosque under the supervision of a Muslim female nurse, Rafaidah, who was specially appointed for the medical work by the Prophet. He himself looked after the treatment and wellbeing of those wounded in the battle for the defence of Islam and prayed to Allah for their recovery.

Key Role of the Mosque

The key role which the Prophet assigned to the Mosque in the religious, social and civic life of the Islamic community in Madina made it essential that Muslim women should also have an important place in its many services as a House of Worship, as the seat of government, as a court of justice, as the college of education, as a source of spiritual succour and as the centre for the propagation of Islam. He made it the true symbol of the theoretic unity of Church and State in Islam and in doing so his endeavour was to ensure that the Islamic community's attachment with the Mosque would grow stronger with the passage of time. This would not have been possible without involving both Muslim men and women in developing the Mosque as Islam's key institution. Hence the Prophet's saying that he who builds a Mosque for Allah will find an abode for himself in Paradise.

There are many historic Mosques in many parts of the Islamic World which were caused to be built by devoted and pious Muslim ladies. Early in the 20th Century A.D., it was the female ruler of the princely state of Bhopal in India who financed the building of the Woking Mosque near London. In Pakistan also, there are many mosques which owe their construction to the zeal and piety of Muslim ladies gifted with affluence and power.

The holding of educational classes for Muslim children in the precincts of the Mosque, both during the lifetime of the Prophet and in succeeding centuries, helped in strengthening the devotional ties of the younger generation of Muslims with the Mosque. They also imbibed the habit of offering their prayers regularly. A part of their schooling and training was to generate in them respect for the sanctity of the Mosque, make them practise the Islamic rules of personal hygiene and cleanliness and inspire in their hearts and minds an abiding love for Allah and his Prophet and the teachings of Islam. As conscientious Muslim mothers, they encouraged their children to go to the Mosque. Therefore, the active involvement of Muslim

women in developing the important institution of the Mosque in the Islamic community's life in Madina was a part of his Prophetic Mission.

Rights of Women in Islam

Islam gives a much higher status to women in matters of inheritance, property, marriage and divorce than any other religion. The right of the bride to get dower (**Mehr**) from the bridegroom at the time of contracting a marriage is specifically mentioned in the Quran and it remains her possession even if she is divorced by her husband. Says the Quran: "And give women their dower as a free gift" (4: 4). In what form the dower should be — in cash or in kind — is subject to mutual agreement. The payment of dower (**Mehr**) by a Muslim to his Christian or Jewish wife is also essential in the context of this Quranic injunction: "And the chaste from among the Believing Women and the Chaste from among those who have been given the Book before you, when you have given them their dower, take them in marriage" (5: 5). A Quranic verse (4: 20) explicitly says that having given the dower to his wife, the husband cannot take it back. The Quran has not laid down the minimum or the maximum amount of the dower payable by a husband to his wife; it depends on the man's circumstances and the woman's social status and their mutual agreement. The right of Muslim women to have a share in the family inheritance is sanctified by the injunctions of the Quran. Wives, mothers, grandmothers, sisters, daughters and granddaughters have rights of inheritance under the Shariah law of Islam and the details of the exact share to which they are entitled are laid down in the Islamic books of jurisprudence (**fiqha**).

While the husband has the right to divorce his wife according to the rules laid down in the **Shariah** law, the wife also has the right to seek the annulment of marriage or its dissolution through the court (**khula**); in the latter case, she may be required to return the dower, in part or in full, to the husband by mutual agreement. According to the Traditionist Bukhari, when the wife of Thabit ibn Qais went to the

court of the Prophet to seek the annulment of her marriage to Thabit (on what would appear to be grounds of serious incompatibility), the Prophet asked her whether she would give back to Thabit the garden he had given to her as dower. When she said Yes, the Prophet said to Thabit: "Take your garden and divorce her". When a husband himself divorces his wife, Islam prescribes a set of rules to ensure that the divorced wife and her children are not without sustenance and that they receive maintenance from the husband according to his status and circumstances. The Prophet, while handling divorce cases, did his best to bring about a reconciliation between the estranged couple in keeping with the Quranic injunctions. He allowed a divorce as a last resort after laying down the conditions of a settlement that were fair to the husband and protected the wife and her children, especially when she was pregnant or was suckling her baby (for at least two years).

Does Islam Encourage Polygamy?

The allegations purveyed in some countries of the West that Islam encourages polygamy and that every Muslim male must have four wives is erroneous. When the Prophet preached Islam, polygamy was widely practised in Arabia and many other countries. In Arab tribes, a man had many wives and concubines. A number of Prophets mentioned in the Jewish Torah and the Christians' Old Testament had more than one wife. Recognising man's biological needs and determined to raise the status of women in society and in the Islamic Order, Islam put polygamy into a straitjacket by permitting a Muslim male to have a maximum of four wives at a time on the condition that he should treat them equally and justly, and if he is unable to do so then he should opt for monogamy. The Quranic commandment says: "...marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if you fear that you will not be able to deal justly with them, then marry only one" (4: 3). This Quranic Revelation came to the Prophet not long after the Battle of Uhud in which quite many Muslims were martyred, leaving a number of widows and orphans

whose wellbeing became a concern of the Islamic State under the Prophet. The Quranic injunction makes it transparently clear that the permission to a Muslim male to have more than one wife (the maximum being four at a time) is **conditional**, that he should be able to treat them **justly** otherwise he should have only one wife.

Marriage is a sacred institution in the Islamic Social Order. Islam gave it the sanctity of a sacrament and a legal contract based on the willing consent of the husband and the wife. It gave each one of them a set of rights and duties to ensure conjugal felicity, the care of the children and a constructive relationship with the society. The Quran says: "...He created for you mates from among yourselves that you may dwell in tranquillity with them and He has put love and mercy between your hearts..." (30: 21). The Prophet, who did not recommend celibacy or monasticism, gave this counsel to the young Muslims: "Whoever is able to marry should marry, for that will help him to lower his gaze and guard his modesty" (Bukhari). As the family is the nucleus of the Islamic Society, Islam sanctifies marriage as the only lawful way to bring that family into existence. The Prophet considered marriage for a Muslim a part of his religion, says a Nigerian scholar, Professor Abdur Rahman Doi in his book, **Women in Shariah** (page 32), "because it shields him from promiscuity, adultery, fornication, homosexuality etc. which ultimately lead to many other evils like slander, quarrelling, homicide, loss of property and disintegration of the family". The husband should be able to provide his wife and children with food, shelter and clothing and the other necessities of life. The wife should do her conjugal duty to her husband, giving him love and loyalty, and taking care of the home and their children. A situation may arise when the wife may not be able to do her wifely duty to her husband. As Islam does not permit a sexual relationship between a man and a woman outside holy wedlock, it permits him to take another wife (the maximum at a time being four) on the condition that he would treat them justly and equally. His wives and his children would continue to have rights on him under the Shariah law and they would not be left high and dry;

the family would not be disrupted and the fabric of society would not be damaged. Obviously this was the humane rationale for Islam's permission to the Muslim male for contracting polygamous unions upto a maximum of four at a time. By giving the right of divorce to the husband as well as the wife, Islam provides the wife, who objects to polygamy, with the safety valve of a legal divorce to disengage herself from what she may consider an unhappy union with a polygamous husband. (Islam's divorce law, as detailed in the books of the Schools of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), is fair and equitable to both the estranged husband and wife). If the Muslim husband, who has a plurality of wives, defaults in dealing with them justly and neglects one of them in respect of her human and material needs, she has the right to move the court to get maintenance from her husband. The Quran says: "Men shall take full care of women because Allah has given the one more strength than the other, and because they support them from their means." (4: 34). In his Sermon on the Mount of Mercy at Arafat, the Prophet had said:

"O people: You have rights over your wives as they have rights over you. Your rights over them are that they live chaste lives and do not admit into their homes anybody whom you dislike and that they do not fall into manifest evil. If they do, Allah permits you to keep them away from your beds in order that they may improve and mend their ways. You may even resort to such light chastisement as may not produce any harmful effect on their bodies. But in case they do no such things you are duty-bound to arrange suitably for their food and clothing, according to your means. Remember that your treatment of your wives should be righteous and kind for they are in your care and cannot safeguard their rights. The day you married them you considered them as a trust of Allah, and you brought them home according to His injunctions" (*Women in the Shariah* by A.R. Doi).

What the Prophet said in his historic Sermon at Arafat was an amplification of the concept of a sacred relationship between hus-

band and wife as is embodied in this Quranic verse: "They are a garment to you and you are a garment to them (2:187)."]

The impression that every Muslim male in a Muslim country has a plurality of wives is a fallacy. In some Muslim countries, such as Tunisia and Turkey, monogamy for Muslims has been instituted by law. In quite a few Muslim countries, such as Pakistan, Syria, Iraq and Morocco, restrictions have been imposed by law on a Muslim male wishing to have more than one wife; he is required to get the Court's permission for it. In those Muslim countries where no legal ban or restriction on a Muslim male having more than one wife has been instituted, the incidence of polygamous marriages is comparatively low, and the family or religious courts provide relief to a wife who feels aggrieved by the conduct of her husband in a polygamous union.

In pre-Independence India, although Muslims were allowed to have more than one wife, the famous Muslim jurist, (the late) Justice Syed Ameer Ali, in his book, the *Spirit of Islam*, wrote in 1922 that 95 out of every 100 Muslims in the subcontinent were practising monogamy. In 1971, the Indian Census Commissioner's report on polygamous marriages in India showed that the percentage amongst Muslims was much lower than amongst the non-Muslims (the Muslim minority in India is now more than 100 million). In populous, Muslim-majority Bangladesh and Indonesia, the incidence of polygamous marriages amongst Muslims is low. Even in the oil-rich conservative Muslim countries where the Shariah law is in force, not every Muslim has more than one wife and the percentage of polygamous marriages is not as large as some Western critics of Islam claim. In the younger generation of Muslims, monogamy is often preferred.

In some countries of Africa, where polygamy is deeply entrenched in society, certain Christian Churches, depending on their denominational liberality, show indulgence towards those Christians who contract polygamous marriages. In certain Christian

countries of the West, such as Britain and the USA where monogamy is the law for all, the nebulous institution of the "Common Law Wife" is becoming a convenient outlet for extra-martial sex. It is winning grudging acceptability from society and a measure of judicial recognition inasmuch as the law courts have begun furnishing relief or redressal of grievance to an aggrieved female against her "Common Law" male partner.

Judaism, under the Talmudic law, permitted polygamy (Even Ha-ezer, I;9 A Guide to Jewish Religious practice, New York, 1979, page 388). Early in the 11th Century A.D., a Jewish Synod called by Rabbi Gershom ben Yehudah banned it for the Jews. The Jewish Sephardic communities living in Muslim countries practised polygamy until 1950 when an edict of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel banned it for them as well. In the USA, the Mormons practised the doctrine of plural marriages in Utah which caused the U.S. Congress to pass the anti-polygamy law late in the 19th Century. In India, Hindus, Jains and Buddhists (besides animist tribals) are allowed by law to practise polygamy if they so wish.

Chapter 15

THE PROPHET AND INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE

Prophet Muhammad, who preached and practised tolerance and goodwill towards other religions and their followers, set an excellent example of inter-Faith Dialogue when he welcomed the Christian ecclesiastical delegation from Najran in Southern Arabia and cordially exchanged views with them on Islam, Christianity, the Islamic State and other religious and temporal matters.

Accounts of this historic dialogue, chronicled by the historians of Early Islam, show that in conformity with the special status which the Holy Quran gave to Christians and Jews as the **People of the Book**, the Prophet of Islam extended to the Christian priests from Najran his hospitality and friendship in the Mosque in Madina and permitted them to offer their ritual prayers in its compound. This Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Madina was conducted in a peaceful, amicable and polite manner over a number of days. Some learned Companions of the Prophet and his son-in-law, Ali, and his daughter, Fatima, were amongst those who participated in this useful inter-religious exchange of views.

Christian Delegation from Najran

The 60-member Christian Delegation from Najran included a number of influential and learned scholars who had studied Christianity in Churches and seminaries in Constantinople, capital city of the Roman Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine rulers and their Church gave subsidies to the Christian community in Najran and its monastery of St. Catherine. The Najran Christians were impressed by the emergence of the Islamic State in Madina and the reports of the high moral conduct of Prophet Muhammad and his followers. They, therefore, sought a meeting with the Prophet in order to understand Islam's teachings and to work out a pact with the Islamic

State. Keen to develop friendly relations with the Christian Arab communities in Arabia and to give them the Message of Islam and the Word of God, the Prophet invited them to send a group to Madina. The many references to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ and the Bible in the Holy Quran and the memory of the Christian Monk, Bahira, and the Makkan Christian scholar, Warqah bin Naufal, who saw in him (Prophet Muhammad) the signs of divine Prophethood, were important factors which prompted him to invite the Najran Christian leaders to visit Madina for talks with him. As a result of this meeting in Madina, the Prophet and the Najran Christian Delegation signed a treaty under which the Islamic State gave its full protection to them, their Churches and other possessions in return for the payment of a small tax and the assurance of support to Madina in time of war.

It was the power of inspired preaching and graceful dialogue which helped the small Muslim community of refugees from Makkan persecution in Abyssinia to win over support of its Christian King, the Negus. When the Negus summoned the leader of the Muslim group, Jaffar Tayyar, to present in his Court, before an assembly of the country's religious and temporal dignitaries, an exposition of the belief and teachings of Islam, Jaffar's presentation was so lucid and forceful that the Abyssinian monarch pledged his protection to the Muslims and gave them asylum. Jaffar was trained in the Islamic Faith by the Prophet himself in Makkah.

The Prophet's decision to emigrate from Makkah to Madina was also the result of his inter-Faith dialogue with the Wise Men who came to him in a delegation from Madina to learn more about Islam and to invite him to make their city his permanent abode and be their leader. Soon after settling down in Madina, the Prophet held a series of meetings with the elders of the **Aws** and **Khazraj** tribes to establish close rapport with them and to unite them under Islam's umbrella. It was the process of constructive and reasoned dialogue which the Prophet used for building up a compact between the

emigrants from Makkah (the **Mohajirs**) and the local inhabitants of Madina (the **Ansars** or **Helpers**) under which each **Helper (Ansar)** adopted an **Emigrant (Mohajir)** as his brother, extending to him the hospitality of his home. (In a short time, all the Emigrants were able to earn their living through their skills and hard work and the Prophet's guidance). Without forging this fraternal bond, it would have been impossible to make Madina the base of the Islamic State. It was an act of the highest statesmanship.

Dialogue with the Jews

During the first few months of his residence in Madina, the Prophet initiated a dialogue with its non-Muslim inhabitants amongst whom the Jewish clans were influential and affluent. Some of the Jewish Rabbis in Madina took interest in the Prophet's teaching of Islam because their holy books had forecast the coming of a Prophet. A few affirmed their faith in Islam but their majority did not recognise the Prophet as God's Messenger, insisting that the Promised One would be born in the Jewish Faith and the Prophet was not a Jew. Despite their disbelief, the Prophet missed no opportunity to win their confidence and had prolonged meetings with their elders. In consultation with them, he framed a covenant of mutual obligation between the Muslims and the Jews of Madina which gave them equal status and they agreed to collaborate, as one community, for its defence. The Covenant of Madina and the Prophet's compact with the Jews of Bani Auf, pledging them full freedom of worship, equality in citizenship rights and mutual cooperation in warding off aggression, were the fruits of his dialogue with the non-Muslims of Madina.

In the dialogue and the exchange of views which the Prophet had with the elders of the Jewish tribes outside Madina, he tried to establish a trusting and mutually helpful relationship, stressing that the holy Quran commands Muslims to respect Prophet Abraham, Ishmael, Issac, Moses, Christ and all the other Apostles mentioned in the Jewish **Torah** and the Christian **Bible**. Many Jewish clans be-

came friends of the Muslim community. A few showed hostility to the Prophet and his Faith which resulted in skirmishes but the moment they sought peace, he opted for negotiations and a peaceful settlement. The Jewish relatives of the Prophet's wife, Safyah bint Huyay, who belonged to the powerful Kinanah clan of the Jewish Bani Nadir tribe in the Khayabar region, visited her and the Prophet, and they became allies of the Islamic State. (She had voluntarily embraced Islam and married the Prophet).

Talking to the Polytheists

Even with the polytheists of Makkah, who had persecuted the Prophet and his followers, forcing them to emigrate to Madina, the Prophet missed no opportunity to engage in a dialogue in the pursuit of peace. The Prophet acted on the Quranic command: "And if they incline towards peace, thou also incline towards it and put thy trust in Allah" (Chapter 8, Verse 28). While negotiating the truce of Hudaibya with the pagan Makkan emissaries, their haughty attitude and procrastination were exasperating for some of the Prophet's Companions and they disliked some of the clauses on whose inclusion in the treaty the pagans insisted. But the Prophet showed Job-like patience and continued the dialogue for days on end because his goal was peace and he was determined to achieve it. The Prophet's signing of the Treaty of Hudaibya was an act of statesmanship because in the following year it became a stepping stone to the Muslims' conquest of Makkah. At the time of Makkah's surrender, the Prophet showed remarkable patience and accommodation in the negotiations because he wanted peace and no bloodshed. His angelic generosity to the defeated foe resulted in a huge bonanza of Makkan converts to Islam; they embraced it with their free will.

Inviting Foreign Rulers to Islam

The Prophet's written invitations to a number of reigning monarchs of his time to enter the fold of Islam were also a part of his custom of inter-religious dialogue to spread the Word of God.

The polite and dignified tone of his letters and the grace of the message in them impressed all the recipients, except one — the arrogant Emperor of Persia. The Prophet's emissaries, who carried his letters to the non-Muslim courts, were especially trained by him to entertain and answer questions about Islam and its teachings and the policy of the Islamic State. The remarkably friendly relationship between the Islamic State of Madina under the Prophet and the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia under the Negus was the result of their understanding of each other's religion and the rapport built up by the exchange of letters and emissaries.

When the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius received the Prophet's emissary in his court, he had his letter read before the assembly of his dignitaries. An inter-Faith dialogue followed in which the Prophet's capable emissary expounded Islam's teachings and its respect for Christ as God's Prophet and the Blessed Virgin Mary as his venerable Mother. The dialogue of the Prophet's emissary with the Christian Bishop of Jerusalem was also useful for Islam and the Islamic State.

Many delegations of non-Muslim tribes in Arabia and its neighbouring lands often visited Madina and held meetings with the Prophet and his Companions to know more about Islam and the Islamic State. Some embraced Islam voluntarily and became its propagators in their tribes; others became steadfast allies of the Islamic State. They asked the Prophet to send them Islamic teachers and he promptly obliged. The special group of Islamic teachers, the **People of the Bench**, who were educated and trained in Islam by the Prophet himself in the Mosque and who had memorised the holy Quran, were deputed on missionary or teaching assignments to many a tribe in Arabia and abroad. They were most effective in the propagation of Islam and they often held inter-Faith dialogues with the learned men of other religions in order to tell them about the Quranic teachings and understand their viewpoint. The Prophet thus followed the Quranic commandment: "Let there be no compulsion

in religion" (2: 256) and "invite (all) to the Way of Thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious" (16: 125). Rooted in this Quranic injunction is Islam's exemplary tolerance which the Prophet and his Caliphs practised in the Islamic State. It demonstrates the utter falsity of the allegation that Islam was spread by the sword. A Communicator par excellence, the Prophet trained his Companions and his team of Islamic propagators in the ways of graceful communication and gracious dialogue to spread God's Message. This was far more durable and effective than the cut of the sword. The powerful Bani Mustaliq tribe was hostile to Islam and the Prophet's Muslim army defeated it in a battle. But the dialogue which the Prophet had with its leader, Harith, after the battle, was so enlightening that the Mustaliq Chief and his two sons embraced Islam; his daughter, Juwayriyah, also entered Islam and married the Prophet. As the Bani Mustaliq were now the kinsmen of the Prophet and allies of the Islamic State, Madina's Muslims immediately released all their prisoners-of-war and many later on became Islam's soldiers. Under the Prophet's instruction, the Islamic State preferred the ways of peaceful dialogue and negotiations as an instrument of State policy, and it went into battle only when war was inflicted on it by the aggressor.

Utility of Inter-Faith Dialogue

Inter-Faith dialogues provide the Muslim scholars with the opportunity to refute anti-Islam propaganda and to explain to the learned men and women of other religions the Message of the Quran and the Prophet's call for peace and the brotherhood of mankind. Not many non-Muslims know the fact that it was the Prophet of Islam who began the practice of granting civic rights to the non-Muslim citizenry on a par with those given to the Muslims. This was the essence of the Charter of Madina which he framed within a year of his emigration to Madina. The Islamic State under the Prophet gave its full protection to the life, liberty, person and possessions of the non-Muslim citizens and it allowed them to practise their religion

freely. They were given the appellation of **Zimmis** or persons whose protection was **the responsibility** of the Islamic State. The Muslims paid the **Zakat** Charity tax to the Islamic State; the non-Muslims paid the **Jizya** tax to it. The Prophet's command to his Companions and the officers of the State was: "Observe scrupulously the protection accorded by me to the **Zimmis**" (the non-Muslim citizens of the Islamic State). The Prophet's life testifies to the fact that in the battles he fought for Islam's defence, whenever the enemy inclined towards peace, the Prophet promptly opted for a peaceful, negotiated settlement. He showed remarkable patience in the negotiations with Islam's foes; his prolonged dialogue with the pagan Makkan emissaries which resulted in the truce of Hudaibya was an example of it.

When a delegation of the non-Muslim Bani Thaqif tribe visited Madina for talks with the Prophet, he showed them courtesy and cordiality and accommodated them in the compound of the Mosque although they were polytheists. In gentle words, he explained to them God's Message in the Quran but he put no pressure on them to embrace Islam. In course of time, most of them entered Islam voluntarily. After the battle of Badr, the Makkan prisoners-of-war were so profoundly impressed by the Prophet's discourse on Islam and the conduct of the Muslims, especially the very civilised treatment given to them, that when they returned to Makkah many practised Islam in secret and later on joined the Islamic fraternity in Madina. The Prophet permitted the burial of some Jews and Christians in the graveyard for Muslims in Madina; they were the parents of Madina's Muslim citizens and the Prophet respected their Faith. Eleven important non-Muslim clans of Arabia were linked to the Prophet through some of his wives. He fostered close family ties with them and spoke to them in graceful language about God and Islam. Within a few years, most of them embraced Islam and became a source of strength to the Islamic State. The chronicles of the Prophet's life abound with examples of his effective use of dialogue and communication to remove misunderstandings about Islam and to spread God's Message.

Prophet Muhammad's Sermon On The Mount Of Arafat

This historic sermon was delivered by the Prophet to a gathering of more than 100,000 Muslims on the 9th Day of the month of Zilhij in the 10th Year after the Hijra in the Uranah Valley of Mount Arafat in Makkah. Given below are excerpts translated from the Arabic text.

"O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether, after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and TAKE THESE WORDS TO THOSE WHO COULD NOT BE PRESENT HERE TODAY.

O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will, indeed, meet your LORD, and that HE will indeed reckon your deeds. ALLAH has forbidden you to take usury (Interest), therefore, all Interest obligation shall henceforth be waived.

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your wives, but they also have rights over you. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your wives well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one whom you do not approve, as well as never to commit adultery.

O People, listen to me in earnest. Worship ALLAH, say your five daily prayers (Salat), fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in Zakat. Perform Hajj if you can afford it. You know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. You are equal. Nobody has superiority over the other except by piety and good conduct.

No Arab is superior to a non-Arab and no non-Arab is superior to an Arab. No dark-skinned person is superior to a white person and no white person is superior to a dark-skinned person. The criteria of honour in the estimation of God Almighty is the individual's righteousness and piety.

Remember, one day you will appear before ALLAH and answer for your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone. O People, NO PROPHET OR APOSTLE WILL COME AFTER ME AND NO NEW FAITH WILL BE BORN. Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand my words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the QUR'AN and my example, the SUNNAH, and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness O ALLAH, that I have conveyed your message to your people."

The Quranic Verses

Say O! people of the Book, Come to common terms as between us and you, that we worship none but God, that we associate no partners with Him: that we erect not from amongst ourselves lords and patrons other than God. (The Quran: 3: 64)

Our Lord: Lay not on us a burden greater than we have the strength to bear; blot out our sins and grant us forgiveness; have mercy on us. Thou art our Protector. Help us against those who stand against our Faith. (The Quran: 2: 286)

I listen to the prayer of every supplicant when he calleth on me. Let them also with a will listen to my call and believe in me, that they may walk in the right way. (The Quran: 2: 186)

O! Ye who believe: When ye deal with each other in transactions involving future obligations for a fixed period of time, reduce them to writing. Let a scribe write down faithfully as between the parties with two witnesses. (The Quran: 2: 282)

Fight in the cause of God those who fight against you but do not transgress the limits, for God loveth not transgressors. (The Quran: 2: 190)

Say: We believe in God and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes and in the Books given to Moses and Jesus and the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between one another amongst them and to God we bow our will in Islam. (The Quran: 3: 83)

O, ye: Who Believe: Obey God and Obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority amongst you. If ye differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to God and His Messenger. If ye do believe in God and the Last Day, that is the best and most suitable for final determination. (The Quran: 4: 59)

And hold fast, all together, by the Rope which God (stretches out for you) and be not divided amongst yourselves. And remember with gratitude God's favour on you: For ye were enemies and he joined your hearts in love, so that by His grace ye became brethren, and ye were on the brink of the pit of fire and he saved you from it. Thus God doth make his signs clear to you that ye may be guided. (The Quran: 3: 103)

Sayings of the Prophet

On the Day of Judgment, God will dislike three kinds of persons i.e. (1) one who makes a promise in the name of God and then goes back on it; (2) one who exploits a free man and swallows what is his due, and (3) one who takes the full measure of labour from a worker and does not give him his wages.

Bukhari

Every Muslim has six duties towards every other Muslim: (1) When he is sick, he should go to see him; (2) when he dies he should attend his funeral; (3) when he calls him for help in any calamity, he should assist him; (4) When he meets him anywhere, he should greet him with "Assalam-o-Aliakum" (peace be upon you); (5) when he sneezes, he should say "May God take mercy on you" and (6) he should always be his well-wisher both in his presence and in his absence.

Nasai

The best man amongst you is he who learns the Holy Quran and teaches it to others.

Bukhari

When a man dies all the good deeds done by him cease except three kinds of deeds which never end. First: any kind of beneficial investment for the good of humanity. Second: the knowledge he has imparted to others. Third: Pious children who would always pray for him.

Muslim

Humanity is a Family of God; so the most beloved of God is he who loves His Family wholeheartedly and maintains good behaviour with his fellow human beings.

Sho'b-ul-Iman

After carrying out the religious duties commanded by God, it is the foremost duty of an able-bodied Muslim to earn a lawful and honest livelihood.

Sho'b-ul-Iman

The man who makes a beggar earn his livelihood instead of begging, will go to the heavens.

Abu. Daud

You cannot be a true Muslim until you like for others what you like for yourself.

Bukhari

Translated from Arabic text

SOME TRIBUTES TO THE PROPHET OF ISLAM

A large number of fair-minded, non-Muslim historians, biographers, Orientalists and theologians have over the centuries paid glowing tributes to the Prophet of Islam for his glorious lifework in preaching Islam and the permanence of the Islamic institutions he founded to demonstrate the practicability of his Faith. In the following lines some of these encomiums are briefly reproduced.

Edward Gibbon, the renowned British historian, wrote in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*: (1870): "It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder—the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran."

A British historian, Vincent A. Smith, in his book, *The Oxford History of India*, (1958), said: "The rapidity of the spread of Islam, the religion of Muhammad, and the dramatic suddenness with which the adherents of his creed rose to a position of dominant sovereignty constituted one of the marvels, or it might be said, the miracles of history."

A.J. Toynbee, a British historian, in his historical work, *Civilization on Trial*, (1948), wrote: "The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding achievements of Islam and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue."

A British historian, J.W. Draper, in his book, *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*; (1875) described Prophet Muhammad as "the man who of all men has exercised the greatest influence upon the human race". He adds: "Mohammad possessed that combination of qualities which more than once has decided the fate of Empires ... To be

the religious head of many empires, to guide the daily life of one-third of the human race may perhaps justify the title of Messenger of God...."

French statesman, novelist and poet, Alphonse de Lamartine, in his historical work, *Histoire de la Turquie*, (1854), wrote: "Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images, the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and one spiritual empire--that is Muhammad. By all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask: is there any man greater than he? "

British dramatist and playwright, George Bernard Shaw, paid this tribute to Prophet Muhammad: "I have studied him, the wonderful man, and, in my opinion, far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the saviour of humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving the many problems in a way that would bring it the much-needed peace and happiness..Europe is beginning to be enamoured of the creed of Mohammad."

An American historian and author, Michael H. Hart, in his book, *The 100--A ranking of the most influential persons in history* (1978), commented: "My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful in both the religious and secular levels".

Modern India's founder, Mahatma Gandhi, wrote in his newspaper organ, *Young India*, that he was convinced that Islam was spread not by the sword but by "the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission."

British historian, Montgomery Watt, in his book, *Mohammad at Mecca* (1953), said: "His readiness to undergo persecution for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader,

and the greatness of his ultimate achievement --all argue his fundamental integrity."

Another British historian, D.G. Hogarth, in his book, *A History of Arabia* (1922), praised the Prophet of Islam in these words: "...his daily behaviour has instituted a canon which millions observe to this day with conscious memory. No one regarded by any section of the human race as a Perfect Man has been imitated so minutely. ...no founder of a religion has been left on so solitary an eminence as the Muslim apostle."

Eminent Theosophist, Annie Beasant, in her book, *Life and teachings of Mohammad* (1932), noted: "It is impossible for any one who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme .."

British historian, Bosworth Smith, in his book, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism* (1874), said: "Head of the State as well as the Church, he was Caesar and Pope in one but he was Pope without the Pope's pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar. Without standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue, if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Mohammad, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports."

A British essayist and author, Thomas Carlyle, in his 1881 book on *Heroes and Hero-worship*, described Prophet Muhammad as a veritable hero: "No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed more as this man in a cloak of his own clouting."

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* describes Prophet Muhammad as "the most successful of all Prophets and religious personalities."

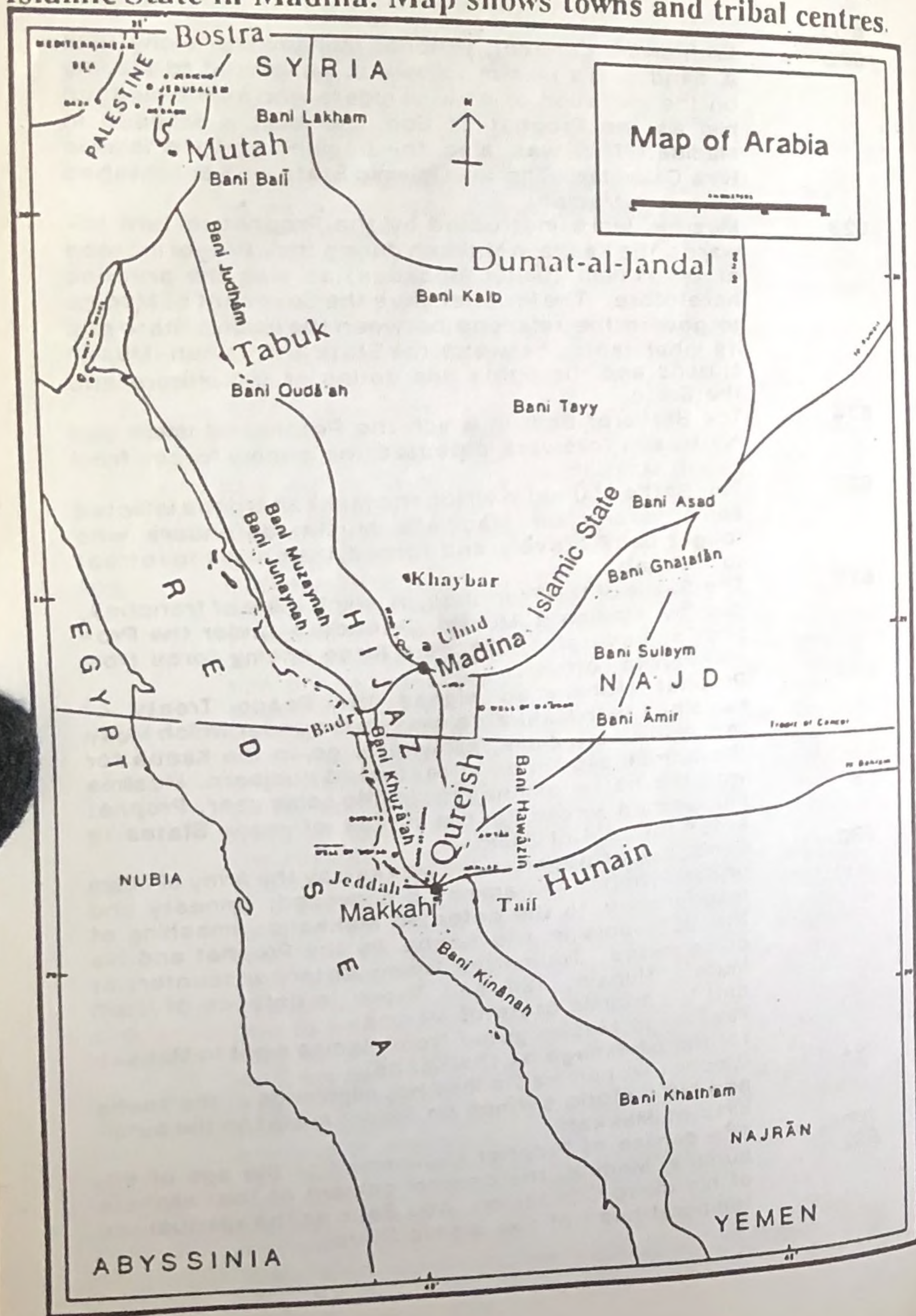
Napoleon Bonaparte, according to a French book, *Bonaparte et l' Islam*, published in Paris, held Prophet Muhammad and Islam in high esteem and he praised the immense contributions of the Muslims to the humanities and the sciences.

Some Important Dates in the Life of the Prophet of Islam

- A.D.
570 Birth of Prophet Muhammad at Makkah in Arabia; his father, Abdullah bin Abdul Muttalib, belonging to the highly-respected clan of Hashim, died a few months before his son's birth. His loving mother, Amina took care of her son.
- 575 Prophet Muhammad's mother died in Madina. His caring paternal grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, brought him up in Makkah.
- 578 Prophet Muhammad's grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, died. He came under the care of his kind-hearted Uncle, Abu Talib.
- 582 Uncle Abu Talib took his young and dutiful nephew on a trading mission to Syria where, at Bostra, a wellknown Christian Monk, Bahira, discerned in the young Muhammad the signs of God's Prophethood.
- 595 Well-versed in commerce, Muhammad led a trading mission to Syria on behalf of a noble widow of Makkah, Khadijah. It was very profitable and Khadijah was highly impressed by his honesty, integrity of character and his good manners. They were married; he was 25, she was 40.
- 605 Muhammad's honesty became a byword in Makkah and the Makkans honoured him with the title of "Amin" (Trustee or the Trusted One). He showed remarkable tact in amicably settling a tribal row over the installation of the celestial Black Stone in the renovated holy Kaaba in Makkah.
- 610 In the Cave of Hira near Makkah, where Prophet Muhammad often went for meditation, the Angel Gabriel visited him and told him that he was chosen to be God's Prophet and he conveyed to him the word of God. Thus began his Prophetic Mission and the revelation of the holy Quran to him.
- 613 In a sermon at Mount Safa, Prophet Muhammad publicly preached the Word of God, urged the Makkans to give up the worship of idols, to join the fold of Islam and to worship the one and only God. This alarmed Makkah's pagan rulers and they started persecuting Prophet Muhammad and his Muslim followers.
- 615 Due to persecution, Prophet Muhammad gave permission to a group of Muslims in Makkah to emigrate to Christian-ruled Abyssinia where the noble Negus gave them asylum. In desperation, Makkah's pagan rulers issued an edict imposing social and economic boycott of the Prophet.
- 620 The death of his dear Uncle Abu Talib and of his beloved wife, Khadijah, in the same year was a double tragedy for the Prophet.
- 621 The Prophet's journey to the Heavens (Meraaj or Ascension) gave him fresh inspiration and the courage of heart to continue his Prophetic Mission in the service of God and Islam.

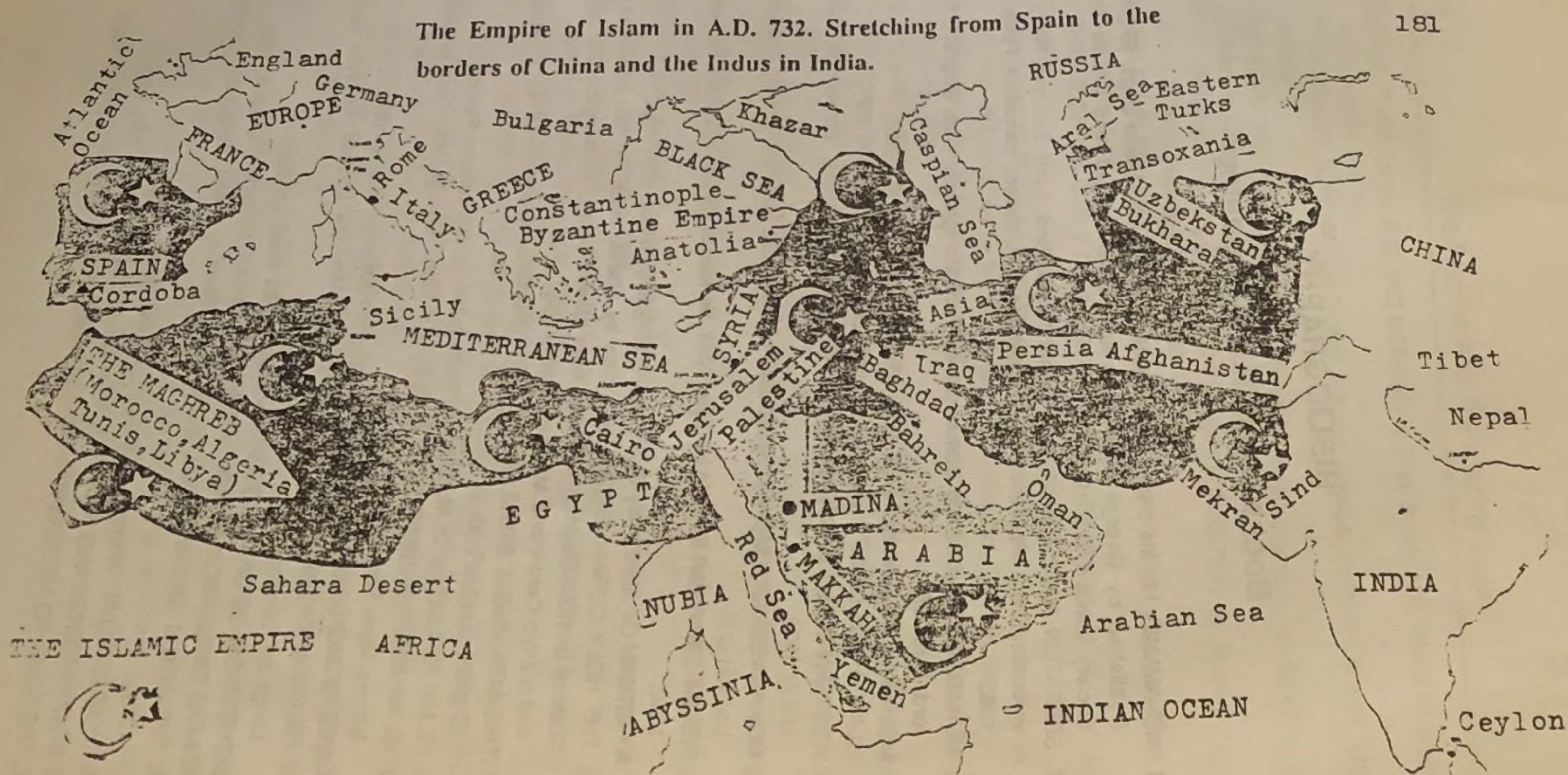
- A.D.
622 With divine consent, Prophet Muhammad, along with a band of his Muslim followers, emigrated to Madina on the invitation of its wise elders who acknowledged him as the Prophet of God. He built a Mosque in Madina. This was also the beginning of the Islamic Hijra Calendar. The first Islamic State was established by him in Madina.
- 623 Muslims were instructed by the Prophet to turn towards the Kaaba in Makkah during their Prayer instead of Jerusalem (Baitul Moqadas) as was the practice heretofore. The Prophet gave the Covenant of Madina to govern the relations between the Islamic State and its inhabitants, between the State and its non-Muslim citizens and the rights and duties of the citizens and the State.
- 624 The Battle of Badr in which the Prophet of Islam and his Muslim followers defeated the enemy forces from pagan Makkah.
- 625 The Battle of Uhud in which the Makkan troops inflicted some losses on Madina's Muslim defenders who fought back bravely and forced the enemy to retreat to Makkah.
- 627 The Battle of the Trenches, in which a line of trenches, dug by Madina's Muslim defenders under the Prophet's leadership, forced a large enemy force from Makkah to retreat.
- 628 Prophet Muhammad signed the Peace Treaty of Hudaibya with Makkah's emissaries under which Muslims were, inter alia, allowed to go to the Kaaba for the annual pilgrimage in restricted numbers. Muslims won the battle of Khaybar in the same year. Prophet Muhammad wrote to the heads of many States to enter the fold of Islam.
- 630 Conquest of pagan-ruled Makkah by the Army of Islam under Prophet Muhammad's command; amnesty and magnanimity to the defeated Makkans; smashing of the 360 idols in the Kaaba by the Prophet and his companions. Triumph of Islam: Military encounters at Mutah, Hunain, Taif and Tabuk in defence of Islam and the Islamic State of Madina.
- 631 First large Muslim group from Madina went to Makkah for Haj pilgrimage at the Kaaba.
- 632 Prophet Muhammad's last Haj pilgrimage at the Kaaba and his historic sermon on Mount Arafat on the outskirts of Makkah.
- June, 632 The demise of Prophet Muhammad at the age of 63; burial in Madina; the commencement of the Caliphate of his close Companion, Abu Bakr as the spiritual and temporal head of the Islamic State.

Arabia in A.D. 622 when Prophet Muhammad founded the Islamic State in Madina. Map shows towns and tribal centres.



The Empire of Islam in A.D. 732. Stretching from Spain to the borders of China and the Indus in India.

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Mr. Aziz was Managing Editor of the United Press of Pakistan News Service from 1950 to 1977 when he joined the Government of Pakistan. He was Commentator on National and International Affairs for Radio Pakistan from 1953 to 1958 and again from 1962 to 1977. He was Pakistan Correspondent of the US International Daily, the Christian Science Monitor, from 1965 to 1977 and it published more than 500 bylined articles by him. He also wrote for the Baltimore SUN of the USA and the Montreal STAR of Canada in the 1970's. In the mid-50's, he was Pakistan Correspondent of the American Phoenix Newspaper Service of the American Friends of the Middle East which serviced 200 newspapers world-wide.

During his more than 6-1/2 years of diplomatic posting in London, major British newspapers published more than 150 letters from him, defending Pakistan. He delivered over 150 lectures on Pakistan, Islamic and international themes in more than 20 towns of the UK, including the Universities of Cambridge, Oxford, Edinburgh and London. Britain's century-old prestigious Institute of Journalists awarded him a certificate of appreciation.

Educated in Lucknow, Delhi, Simla and Hyderabad (Deccan), he is B.A. (Honours) and M.A. from the University of Madras in India. He studied International Relations at the London School of Economics in 1948-49 and trained with Reuters News Agency in Fleet Street. As a journalist, he has covered a dozen sessions of the UN General Assembly, the 1955 Bandung Conference and scores of other international and regional conferences. He has interviewed more than a hundred world leaders, including ex-Premier Bulganin, late Premier Chou En Lai, late President Truman and ex-President Nixon. He represented Pakistan in the Asian Conference on Religion and Peace in Singapore in 1976 and the 1979 World Conference on Religion and Peace in Princeton in the USA. He has travelled in some 65 countries. He has authored many books on foreign policy issues, international affairs, social welfare, Islamic themes, life of the Prophet, etc. Mr. Aziz is honorary Director of the New York-based, UN-aided Centre for Population Communication.

Mr. Aziz was on deputation to the Embassy of Pakistan, Washington D.C. in 1971. Mr. Aziz was member of the Government's National Council of Social Wel-

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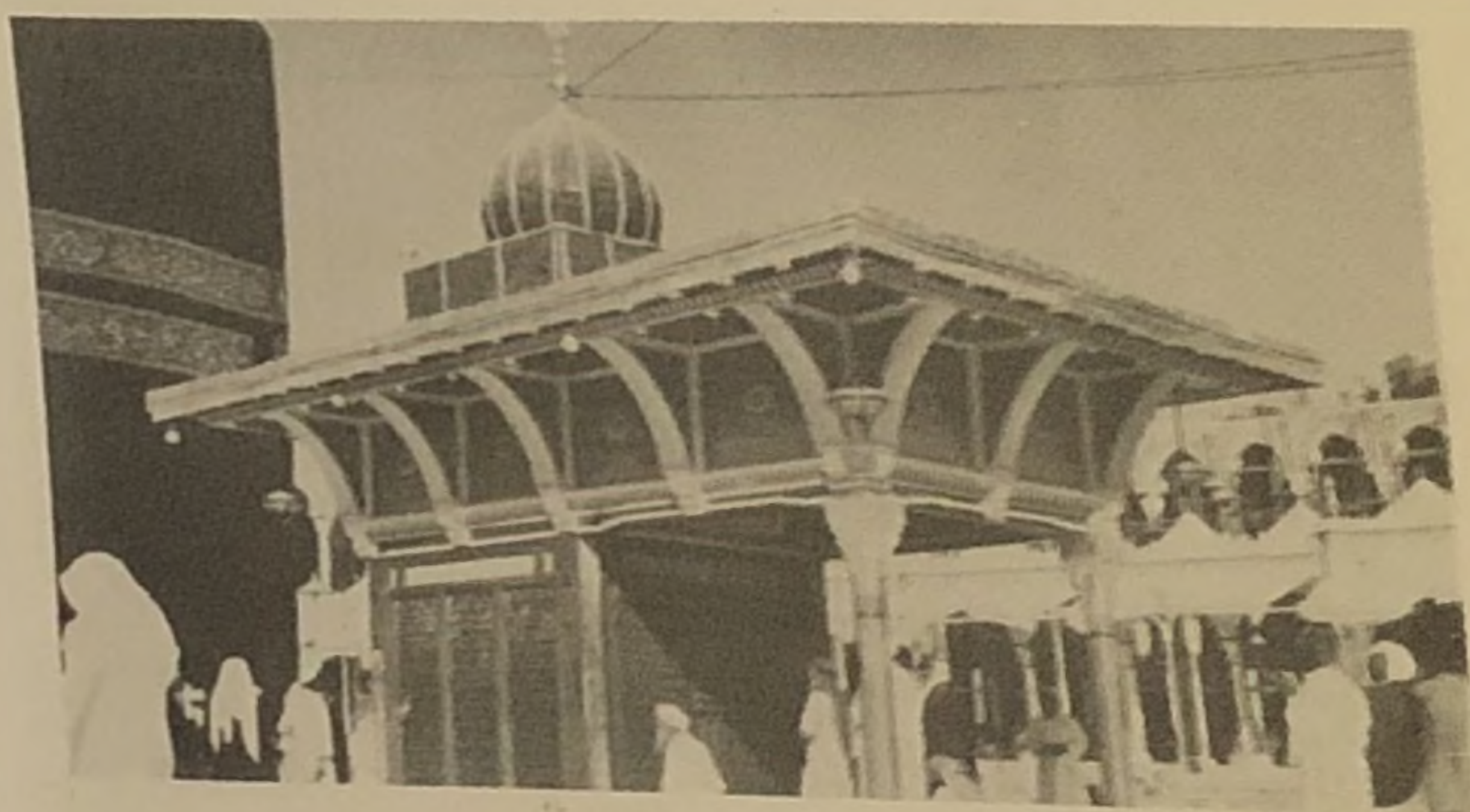
As President of the Social Services Coordinating Council, Karachi, Mr. Aziz was active in a UNHCR-aided project for helping the Ugandan Asian refugees in Pakistan in 1974-76. Mr. Aziz served as Adviser to the Dawood Foundation, Karachi, in its scholarship and grant-giving programmes and initiated its project for setting up the Dawood College of Engineering and Technology in Karachi in the 1960's. He has over the years taken a keen interest in family planning programmes in Pakistan and written on it in Pakistani and foreign newspapers. The Government of Pakistan awarded him Tamgha-i-Pakistan in 1971. He was an elected member of the Karachi Municipal Corporation in 1957-58 and took active interest in civic betterment. He is a former Vice-President of Karachi Union of Journalists and a former member of the Standing Committee of the Council of Pakistan-Newspaper Editors. He is member of the Managing Committee of the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs. He is Honorary Adviser to the UK-Pakistan Cultural Foundation, London. He was Treasurer of the Coordinating Council for Colonial Students' Affairs, in 1948-49 in the U.K. and represented Pakistan in the International Youth Conference held in London in 1948. He was General Secretary and later on Vice-President of the students' unions of St. George's Grammar School and Nizam's College in Hyderabad Deccan. Born in Lucknow in 1929, his maternal grandfather, Nawab Abdullah Khan, was owner and Editor of the Daily Hamdam, Lucknow. His father, Syed Abdul Hafiz, was a journalist who worked in New Delhi and Simla and later on in Hyderabad Deccan as Bureau Manager of United Press of India News Agency and he founded in Pakistan in 1949 the United Press of Pakistan News Agency. His Mother, Begum Khurshid Hafiz, was a member of the Hyderabad State Legislative Assembly in 1946-48.

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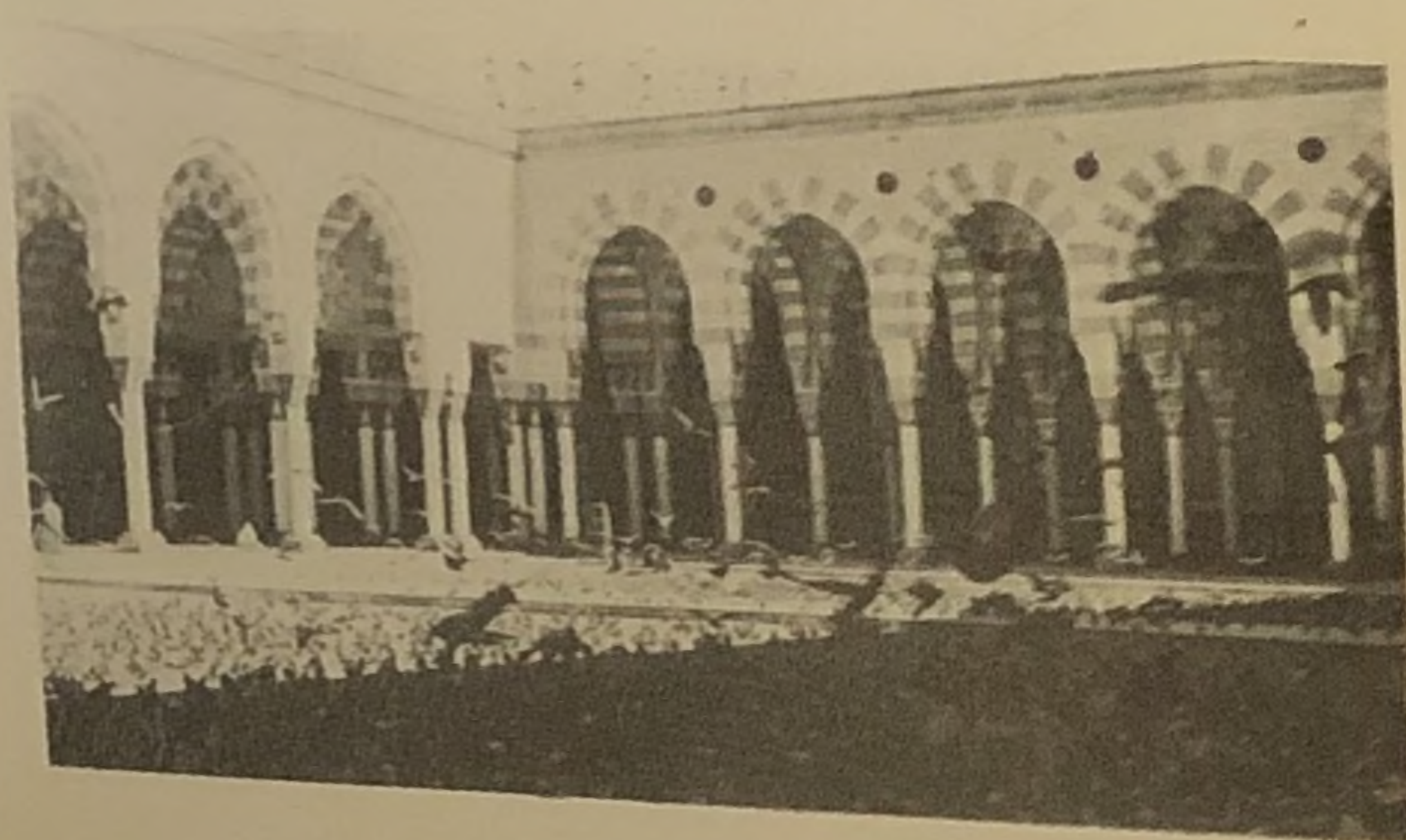
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Camps of pilgrims for Haj near Arafat in Makkah



A view of pilgrims at the Kaaba in Makkah



An inside view of the Prophet's Mosque in Madina

THIS BOOK

Fourteen centuries ago the Prophet of Islam established the world's first Islamic State in Madina in Arabia to demonstrate the eminent practicability of the dynamic precepts of his Faith and to give them institutional shape and permanence. In an eventful decade, he made its foundations so strong and solid that within 80 years of his demise in A.D. 632, it blossomed into the Islamic Empire, stretching from the borders of France to the fringes of China and the banks of the Indus in India. Some Western historians have described this astonishing surge of Islam across Asia, Africa and Europe in so short a time as one of the marvels and miracles of history. While Europe slumbered in the Dark Ages, the Islamic Empire spread Islam and a glittering culture of knowledge and learning in the world. Its glories enriched human civilisation for more than a thousand years and its imperishable legacy animates the souls of over a billion Muslims today in the era of Islam's resurgence. In this concise book, Qutubuddin Aziz, an internationally-known journalist and a former Pakistani diplomat, presents a profile of the lifework of the Prophet of Islam and a fascinating synopsis of the many facets and dimensions of the Islamic State he founded as a part of his Prophetic Mission to spread God's Word in the world. Mr. Aziz was Special Correspondent in Pakistan of US Daily, the Christian Science Monitor, (1965-77), Minister at the Pakistan Embassy in London (1978-86) and Chairman of Pakistan's semi-Government National Press Trust Group of newspapers (1986-87). He was on deputation to the Embassy of Pakistan, Washington D.C. in 1971.

